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Major League Sports Teams as Storytellers: A Communication Infrastructure Perspective

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Major League Sports Teams as Storytellers:
A Communication Infrastructure Perspective

by

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Dedication

To Jill, the love of my life and the source of all my favorite stories.

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Abstract

Major League Sports Teams as Storytellers: A Communication Infrastructure Perspective

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Scholars have argued that a major league sports team's main benefit to a city is not the team's economic impact, but the team's ability to unify residents and affect how people feel about their city. Such intangible benefits, scholars have lamented, are nearly impossible to quantify. This dissertation, which quantifies a team's intangible benefits, argues that major league teams act as the source and subject of stories that affect residents' beliefs about and behaviors within their city.

Using communication infrastructure theory, I test the supposition that major league sports teams act as city-wide (macro-level) storytelling organizations, and that their presence is tied to residents' sense of belonging, collective efficacy, participation in civic activities, and connectedness to local storytelling networks. My investigation considers how residents are affected by (a) the presence or absence of teams in their city, (b) the strength of residents' fandom, and (c) the success of the local team(s). Gender is also explored as a moderating variable in the relationships between residents and teams.

A variety of data sets and methods were used. An original survey was administered to residents of 56 U.S. cities to test hypotheses related to the effects

mentioned above. In addition, twelve years of data (2004 to 2015) from the U.S. Current Population Survey and from publicly available tax documents from local chapters of the United Way were analyzed to uncover relationships between team success and volunteerism/charitable giving. Hierarchical linear modeling was used to examine quantitative data, and a thematic content analysis was done to code residents' open-ended survey responses.

Results reveal that local fandom has positive relationships with sense of belonging, civic participation, and connectedness to the storytelling network, and team success has a positive association with collective efficacy. In some of these cases, however, gender is a significant moderator, and team success also was shown to have a negative association with volunteerism. Furthermore, results from the thematic content analysis suggest that major league teams play an important role in creating a sense of connectedness to others and place. The conclusion is that major league teams act as city-wide storytellers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> "I came of age convinced if the Dodgers had stayed, everything would have been better…. I would not have grown up in the dull, flat Brooklyn that I knew growing up. I would have come of age in a dynamic, engaging, interesting place. And so the Dodgers for me represented a past that I missed out on. I think for people who are older it was a past that they remembered. And I think that towns don't get over that kind of thing so quickly. They really don't." – Journalism professor Michael Shapiro[1]

> "I'm not sitting on top of the [St. Louis] arch drinking a Bud Light and talking about how we have the greatest city. But we have an awesome city. Losing a franchise in the greatest sports league is very disheartening because it makes it look like we're a second-level city now." – *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reporter Benjamin Hochman[2]

It is a common refrain that we do not appreciate something until after it is gone. Brooklynites had major league baseball for more than 70 years. The people of St. Louis had football for 20. When the teams left, heading west in search of greater fortunes, the jilted fans' reactions ranged from disappointment to devastation. The stories told in the above quotations reveal that these teams meant more to their communities than simply the entertainment they provided or the money they did (or didn't) add to the city's coffers. The teams engaged the people and enlivened the cities. Even when they had

[1] Quote taken from a radio interview conducted by Yuval Rosenberg, 2010 Jul 26, WNYC. Retrieved from http://www.wnyc.org/story/89048-what-dodgers-meant-brooklyn/. Shapiro is a professor of Journalism at Columbia University and the author of *Bottom of the Ninth: Branch Rickey, Casey Stengel, and the Daring Scheme to Save Baseball from Itself*.

[2] From Curtis, Bryan (2016, Aug 22). The St. Louis Blues: What happened to the media the Rams left behind. Retrieved from www.theringer.com.

losing records, they remained sources of identity. They were the maypoles around which the communities could dance.

The objective of my dissertation is to explain how residents are affected by the major league sports teams in their cities. Wishing to avoid the error of only appreciating something after it's gone, I aim to measure what a team means in the city that it currently calls home. What might the Royals mean to Kansas City? The Bills to Buffalo? I suggest that the presence of a major league sports franchise, as well as the team's on-field fortunes, affect not only how people feel about where they live, but also their civic participation within the community.

To test these ideas, I turn to communication infrastructure theory (CIT). This theory explains how a community's communication environment – the network of storytellers (i.e., individuals, the media, and organizations) and the context in which these stories are told – affects people's beliefs and behaviors (Ball-Rokeach, Kim, & Matei, 2001).[3] Time and again, CIT studies have shown that feelings of community belonging, perceptions of collective efficacy, and civic participation are tied to how people talk to neighbors, attend to media, and associate with local organizations (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a, 2006b; Kim et al., 2015; Wilkin, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2009).

[3] As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, *stories*, as used in CIT and in my dissertation, does not refer to fictional tales, myth-making, or dramaturgy, but instead deals with communications that are centered on, and help create a sense of, community.

CIT is a robust system of ideas, and I seek to test and expand the theory in my examination of major league sports teams. Organizations within a community are not only places where stories can be shared with others, but also sources of stories themselves (see Villanueva, Broad, Gonzalez, Ball-Rokeach, & Murphy, 2016). Communities can have many organizations that fit this description – churches, political groups, service organizations, businesses, and others that serve as both the focus and site of storytelling. To date, however, CIT studies have typically limited the scope of organizations that fit under the storytelling umbrella to those to which a person can "belong" (e.g., Kim & Kang, 2010) or have a membership (e.g., Kim et al., 2015), and those that tend to be non-profit or service focused (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a). Certainly, the neighborhood church or the homeowners' association would fit these two requirements. But what about city-wide institutions that do not allow for formal membership or are for-profit endeavors? Such organizations could be a major business, employing thousands of residents, and whose actions affect the entire metropolitan area. Maybe it's the new science center or aquarium, where many of its visitors are not formal members. Or it could be the sports franchise, with its legions of followers who proudly wear team apparel and ask neighbors, "did you see the game?"[4] These and

[4] Many people are not sports fans and do not attend to their city's sports franchise(s). I argue later in the dissertation that the ubiquity of team-related talk, events, and media coverage has an impact on the community-related beliefs and behaviors of non-fans.

other organizations like them, I contend, are also storytellers that cast their influence into neighborhoods across the city.

Such a contention expands CIT's scope to allow for the consideration of city-wide organizational influences (in my case, major league sports franchises) in the storytelling network. My suggestion is that how we feel about our community, and the actions we take in it, are influenced by more than the neighborhood organizations to which we have formal memberships; we are also influenced by the stories generated by and told about organizations, like major league sports teams, that come to represent an entire city (Heere & James, 2007). These city-wide storytellers help bind residents to each other and to their city.

And so, the goal of my dissertation is to bolster CIT's organizational scope by measuring the influence of major league sports teams on sense of belonging, collective efficacy, civic participation, and connectedness to the community storytelling network. To this end, Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature on sports franchises, their place in the city landscape, and their influence on fans and non-fans alike. The chapter also lays out the origins and current state of CIT, and includes the hypotheses and research questions that will guide my inquiry. Chapter 3 outlines the methods that I used to test my suppositions. These methods include an original survey, administered to residents of 56 U.S. cities, as well as the analysis of twelve years of donation and volunteerism data culled from, respectively, publicly available tax documents and U.S. Bureau of the Census records. Chapter 4 reports the results of statistical analyses

related to the survey, donation, and volunteer data. Chapter 5 provides more insight into the connection between teams and cities by presenting results from an analysis of responses to several of my original survey's open-ended questions. Finally, Chapter 6 brings all the findings together, discussing the results and their theoretical and practical implications.

Summary

Celebrated baseball writer Roger Angell (1972), lamenting the demise of teams and the demolition of old stadiums, had this to say:

> All these I mourn, for their loss constitutes the death of still another neighborhood – a small landscape of distinctive and reassuring familiarity. Demolition and alteration are a painful city commonplace, but as our surroundings become more undistinguished and indistinguishable, we sense, at last, that we may not possess the scorecards and record books to help us remember who we are and what we have seen and loved. (p. 58)

For fans and non-fans alike, a team is an unmistakable, unique presence in a community. It provides the centerpiece for the community's largest gatherings, and a focal point for media coverage and over-the-fence conversations. A team helps a community exult in victory and cope with defeat, even tragedy. It is the source and object of rituals, experiences, memories, hope – stories – that mean much more than the simple box scores that reflect a game's outcome. Through the course of this dissertation, I show through empirical evidence that major league sports teams have the

potential to act as city-wide storytelling organizations. In such a role, they can strengthen individuals' storytelling networks, thereby prompting a greater sense of belonging, an increase in collective efficacy, and a rise in civic participation. Teams have the unique ability to create a collective "we," which is, ultimately, one of storytelling's highest goals (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001).

Chapter 2: Cities, Sports, and Storytellers

> "For the Astros to win, for the City of Houston, this was personal. It has been personal. And it is a 'we' moment for the City of Houston. This World Series, and the championship, and the Astros, literally, they have brought this city together like never before." – Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner[5]

> "The Buffalo area has gone through some hard times over the past 30 years and even though the Bills and Sabres haven't been the best in their respective sports for much of that time, they are the most consistent bridge between all members of the community. They are an important part of who I am and the city in which I choose to live…. They are part of this community. When talking about the Bills or Sabres it doesn't matter your ethnic or financial background. Everyone is the same. It is one of Buffalo's common denominators." – Survey respondent, male, 35, Buffalo, NY[6]

From city leaders to everyday citizens, people have postulated that major league sports teams matter to their towns and their fellow residents. The two quotations above are emblematic of the notion that teams mean something more than the details found in a box score or the fans' fleeting moments of victory-induced euphoria. The Mayor of Houston and the unknown Buffalo resident are both suggesting that what makes a team matter is its potential to connect people to each other and to their community. As

[5] Mayor Turner made this remark during a press conference on November 2, 2017, the day after the Houston Astros won Major League Baseball's 2017 World Series; this was nine weeks after Hurricane Harvey struck Houston.

[6] This quotation comes from an anonymous respondent's open-ended answers to the two following questions in my survey for this dissertation: "What do professional sports mean to you?" and "In a few words, can you tell me why you think the quality of life in Buffalo would fall a great deal if all the professional sports teams left Buffalo?"

Danielson (1997) noted, “sports provide one of the rare opportunities for people to emphasize their communal ties” (p. 110), and this chapter traces a theoretical pathway for how teams accomplish this feat.

I begin by reviewing literature on sports and community, noting both the good and bad that can come with being a “big league city.” The focus then shifts to communication infrastructure theory (CIT), with special attention on the role of storytellers and CIT’s focus on the three civic engagement variables of belonging, collective efficacy, and civic participation. I then circle back to sports and look at fandom, reflecting on ways in which local major league sports teams may influence not just fans, but non-fans as well. Finally, throughout the course of this literature review, I present three multi-part hypotheses related to how residents are affected by the presence of major league teams, individual levels of fandom, and team performance.

Sports and the Community

Ernest Thayer’s American folktale, *Casey at the Bat*, is the story of a baseball game played between the hometown Mudville Nine and an unnamed visiting team. Improbably, Mudville’s best player – Casey – comes to bat with a chance to win the game. Thayer’s tale ends with these lines:

> Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
> the band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
> and somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;

but there is no joy in Mudville — mighty Casey has struck out.[7]

Casey's strikeout costs the Nine the game, and Thayer's words intimate that it wasn't merely the fans who were joyless at the outcome, but that Casey's strikeout left all of Mudville mourning; the entire community was affected by what happened on that ballfield. I argue that a major league sports team's presence and fortunes can likewise reverberate throughout a city. Casey's failings played on a fictional town's mood, but research shows that sports can have real-world effects. Sports-related emotions have been postulated to affect an individual's political evaluations (Healy, Malhotra, & Mo, 2010; but see Fowler & Montagnes, 2015) and even the success of mayors running for reelection (Miller, 2013). While not discounting the role of mood, I suggest that something less ephemeral is at play when it comes to influencing how people feel about and engage in their community, namely that sports franchises fulfill the role of a storytelling organization by acting as catalysts for communication among community members (see Ball-Rokeach, et al., 2001, p. 399). Teams generate stories that are told and retold across fences and cubicles and dinner tables. My contention is that these sports stories – and others sparked by an initial conversation about sports (Walsh, 2004) – tie people to each other and to the greater community that a team comes to symbolize (Heere & James, 2007).

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7 *Casey* was first published in 1888 in *The San Francisco Examiner*. Retrieved from: http://www.baseball-almanac.com/poetry/po_case.shtml

A community organization's purpose is to provide a gathering place for people and to be a repository of stories related to the history, people, issues, and opportunities shared by residents (Ball-Rokeach, et al., 2001). Sports teams, as I will show, fulfill this purpose. They allow for gathering and simultaneous experience. As community symbols, they create stories not just about victory and defeat, but about civic priorities, pride, and unity (O'Rourke, 2003). A sports team has an impact on people far greater than what can be surmised from revenue totals or tallies in a team's win/loss column.

As elucidated by CIT, the stories we tell are tied to the media, organizations, and people with whom we interact (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a). It follows that the more similar a community's media diet and organizational interests, the more stories it should have in common. Conversely, the more a community's media and organizational interests differ, the fewer stories it has in common. Today's fractured media landscape (Prior, 2007) coupled with the breakdown of many traditional social organizations (Putnam, 2000) call into question just how – or if – community members can create a shared narrative and find common ground. Anderson (1991) argued for the preeminent role of simultaneous experience in bringing a people together. Although his work focuses on nationhood, Anderson's ideas apply equally to unifying people in smaller locales: communities exist not because of arbitrary geographic boundaries, but because of shared experiences that forge bonds between those who are otherwise strangers. Few organizations provide a community with more opportunities for simultaneous experience than a major league sports franchise.

When considering a sports team's ability to generate community, it is important to emphasize the simultaneity of experience. Developmental psychologists Tomasello and Carpenter (2007) suggested that experiencing the same thing at the same time is not just an opportunity to socialize, but a key step in the creation of "a shared space of psychological ground" (p. 121) that allows people to internalize "social norms, collective beliefs, and cultural institutions" (p. 124). Such conclusions are bolstered by a robust number of psychology studies that examine what happens when people sing or dance together. These studies find that engaging in acts of simultaneous experience lead people to be more cooperative, more group-minded, and less selfish (e.g., Cirelli, Einarson, & Trainor, 2014; Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009; see also Koehne, Hatri, Cacioppo, & Dziobek, 2016). All of this work suggests that, for example, community members who attend the same restaurants on different nights, or watch the same television show at different times, will have something similar to talk about, but the lack of simultaneity in their experiences will limit the community-minded connection among them. Vickhoff et al. (2013; see also Koelsch, 2014), who found that singing together synchs singers' heartrates, went so far as to say that a group's outward cooperative actions correspond to an internal synchronicity, allowing people who are sharing an experience "to change their egocentric perspective of the world to a *we-perspective* which causes them to perceive the world from the same point of view and thus defining who *we* are" (p. 13, emphasis in the original). In a similar vein, Anderson (1991) felt that communal singing

(a common sporting-event ritual), among other simultaneous experiences, has a unique power to foster community ties:

> Take national anthems, for example…. No matter how banal the words and mediocre the tunes, there is in this singing an experience of simultaneity. At precisely such moments, people wholly unknown to each other utter the same verse to the same melody…. If we are aware that others are singing the songs precisely when and as we are, we have no idea who they may be, or even where, out of earshot, they are singing. Nothing connects us all but imagined sound. (loc 255 of 447)

In the stadium, spectators, and sometimes athletes, join in singing not only anthems, but other songs, chants, and cheers.[8] These and other in-stadium traditions – which some have likened to religious ritual (e.g., Fleer, 2007; Scholes, 2015) – aid in creating a "collective consciousness" (Haensch, 2013, 2:26),[9] and a shared experience the likes of which is potentially unrivaled in other regularly held and attended community events. Trujillo (1992; see also Turner & Krizek, 1994) likened the community formed within a major league ballpark to the powerful, spontaneous

[8] The singing does not have to be confined to the stadium. Following a Chicago Cubs 2016 World Series game victory, the Cubs anthem, *Go Cubs Go*, could be heard over a mile away from the ballpark. For example, see: http://www.cbssports.com/mlb/news/watch-you-could-hear-wrigley-field-singing-go-cubs-go-from-about-a-mile-away/

[9] The full quotation comes from Vickhoff in a video that accompanied a National Public Radio story. He said: "Every time people get together, for example at a football stadium, some type of collective consciousness is formed. It's quite possible that people's sensitivity to each other and ability to cooperate may also be affected." Retrieved from: http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2013/07/09/200390454/when-choirs-sing-many-hearts-beat-as-one

bonding experience of religious pilgrims described by anthropologist Victor Turner (1974) as "communitas."[10] Of course, communities gather for a number of non-sports-related reasons: holiday parades, local festivals, memorials for prominent citizens, business openings, etc. But few, if any, of these events, occur with the same regularity, frequency, or crowd-gathering capability of sporting events. For example, in 2018, the average attendance for a Major League Baseball game (there are 81 home games per season) was 28,660.[11] Is there any other regular community event that attracts that many people, and so frequently?

Beyond the in-stadium experiences are the opportunities to watch the games together in sports bars (Cottingham, 2012; Gantz, 2013), to tailgate (Cottingham, 2012; Delaney, 2008), and to attend parades at the start the season[12] and, especially, in celebration of a championship. Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications estimated that 5 million people attended the 2016 Cubs World Series championship parade (Cherone, 2016). Although that figure was challenged – others

[10] Turner (1974) described communitas as "spontaneous, immediate, concrete – it is not shaped by norms, it is not institutionalized, it is not abstract" (p. 274). Communitas creates a sense of homogeneity among people: it is "the direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities which tends to make those experiencing it think of mankind as a homogenous, unstructured, and free community" (p. 169).

[11] Average attendance figure calculated using 2018 attendance figures retrieved from: https://www.baseball-reference.com/leagues/MLB/2018-misc.shtml. NFL football has only 8 regular-season home games, but an average 2017 attendance of 67,396 per game (data retrieved from: https://www.pro-football-reference.com/years/2017/attendance.htm.

[12] For example, since 1920, the city of Cincinnati has held the annual Findlay Market Parade in celebration of their Major League Baseball team's (the Reds) first game of the season, an event that attracts thousands each year (Hamrick, 2016).

saying it was closer to 1 million (Baker, 2016) – it does not change the fact that sports allow many people an opportunity for some measure of communal synchronicity in an otherwise asynchronous world.

Of course, not everyone can attend a game in person or gather with friends and fans to cheer on a team.[13] Yet, feeling connected to the team and other partisans still happens beyond the stadium walls (Cottingham, 2012). Media broadcasts give those who cannot attend in person an opportunity to share in many aspects of the game, an important consideration in our era of time-shifted media (Taylor, 2015). No longer does television generally allow, for example, for people to "commune with some central value, aware that everybody else is performing the same ritual at the same time" (Katz, 1998, p. 93; see also Manjoo, 2017). Instead, people watch television shows and movies on demand, they attend to news at their leisure, and what they read on social media is generally presented to them not in chronological order, but in a personalized order based on social-media-company-determined algorithms and individual browsing behavior (Mosseri, 2016). Sports programming is the exception. Many still desire to watch or listen to the game live, worried that if they do not, they will discover the game's outcome before they are able to enjoy the unfolding on-field drama (Nielsen,

[13] The choice to not attend a game in person is a preference for some fans, while for others it is not a possibility due to high ticket prices and/or the time required to attend a game (see Smith & Ingham, 2003).

2016).[14] With sports programming consistently at the top of live-television ratings (Nielsen, 2016), it is not hard to imagine that on a game night, a city's residents are more likely to experience the game together than any other mediated (or-unmediated, for that matter) event, allowing them to still "commune with some central value" (Katz, 1998, p. 93).

Whether conveying stories in-person or via media, sports teams have the potential to be wide-reaching storytelling agents within communities throughout a city. Sutton, McDonald, Milne, and Cimperman (1997) suggested that major league sports teams, acting as "vehicles of communication" (p. 21), can foster an intergenerational sense of belonging not only to the team, but to the community (see also O'Rourke, 2003). This can be especially important when tragedies strike, a time when teams can transform into a community rallying point. Such was the case following, for example, 2013's Boston Marathon bombing (Benbow, 2013; Lauber, 2016), the 2016 Orlando nightclub shooting (D'Angelo, 2016), and 2017's Hurricane Harvey.[15] The last of these three examples was made all the more dramatic with the Houston Astros winning the

[14] Nielsen (2016) reported the following: "While the rise in time-shifted viewing has altered viewing habits for nearly all program genres, live viewing remains the standard for sports. According to TV data from fourth-quarter 2015, 95% of total sports viewing happens live. In comparison, only 66% of general drama viewers watch live. In fact, sports accounted for 93 of the top 100 live-viewed TV programs in 2015, compared to just 14 in 2005." For more information, see: http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2016/catch-it-live-sports-viewing-scores-a-programming-goal.html

[15] Whether in times of unique tragedy or routine community need, some teams may be more or less involved in their respective cities. Although my study is not a content analysis of community involvement by individual teams, my statistical analyses will control for the different metropolitan areas in which each team is located.

World Series only nine weeks after the city was hit by the hurricane (Fernandez & Debenedetto, 2017). In such cases, the teams not only provided opportunities to remember victims and demonstrate a city's resilience in the face of terror or disaster, but they also became a symbol of unity and hope (Brasseur, 2013) and civic pride (Johnson et al, 2001).[16] Whether times are tragic or not, a team "provides a collective identity" that makes it inseparable from the larger community in which it exists (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003, p. 277).

Community or civic pride is, in fact, an oft-cited benefit of having sports teams (Boyd, 2000; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998). With economists consistently finding that building new stadiums for major league teams yields little to no economic benefit to a city (e.g., Baade, 1994; Coates & Humphries 2003; Noll & Zimbalist, 1997), other researchers have suggested that what teams fail to bring in terms of money may be made up for in non-economic factors. Such factors include civic pride (Baade & Dye, 1988; Chapin, 2002; Johnson et al., 2001) and what Crompton (2004) called "psychic income" – the emotional and psychological benefits that come to residents of a team's city. Using the contingent valuation method,[17] scholars have failed to show that

[16] Using Hurricane Katrina and the re-opening of the New Orleans Superdome as an example, Grano and Zagazki (2011) have offered a counterpoint: teams and their stadiums may act as agents of commemoration, but they may also "lead to a visual forgetting or erasure of the very subjects the rituals seeks to memorialize, effectively re-marking these subjects as invisible in the name of national healing" (p. 202). In other words, care must be exercised to not allow post-disaster sporting events and commemorations to overshadow or erase the problems that still exist.

[17] The contingent valuation method is an attempt to look at non-economic factors in an economic light. This method is frequently used in environmental studies that seek to assess the social value of natural parks, endangered species protection, etc. See Mitchel and Carson (1989) for more information.

intangible benefits can offset the lack of direct economic gains (Johnson & Whitehead, 2000; Johnson, Groothuis, & Whitehead, 2001; Owen, 2006). It is difficult, however, to measure the intangible benefits. Having a sense of belonging, or a desire to volunteer in the community, or an interest in voting in the next election, may not lend themselves to economic valuation. Yet these are potential tangible benefits of a sports team's presence that have, as of yet, not been measured. To this point, Quirk and Fort (1992), having just finished reporting on the dearth of economic benefits that come to a city from a sports team, concluded:

> It might well be that the most important benefit that a team provides for a city is as a common identification symbol, something that brings the citizens of the city together, especially during those exhilarating times when the city has a World Series champion, or a Super Bowl winner. It is next to impossible to quantify this aspect of the benefits of a team, but this does not mean that the benefits don't exist. (p. 176)

My study measures such benefits, not using an economist's approach, but using a proven communication approach. Indeed, CIT, a theory to which I turn next, provides perhaps the best method for assessing how a major league sports team's presence affects residents' beliefs about and behaviors within their community.

Communication Infrastructure Theory

Communication infrastructure theory (CIT) is an outgrowth of media system dependency theory (MSD) (Ball-Rokeach, 1985, 1988; see also Ball-Rokeach & DeFluer,

1976). As its name suggests, MSD deals with the relationship that people have with the media and the media's capacity to create, gather, process, and disseminate information (see Ball-Rokeach, 1985, p. 487; see also Kim & Jung, 2016, pp. 3-4). CIT "goes beyond [MSD] to more inclusive consideration of the interplay between interpersonal and mediated storytelling systems and their contexts" (Ball-Rokeach, et al., 2001, p. 396; see also Matei, Ball-Rokeach, & Qiu, 2001). In other words, where MSD explicates individual dependence on media, CIT looks at media as one of several nodes in a storytelling network situated in, and affected by, a dynamic environment.

The word *storytelling* deserves some attention as it plays a key role in CIT. Indeed, "the most basic premise of CIT is that local communities are based on resources for storytelling about the community" (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 177). In CIT, *storytelling* is not used to connote the telling of fictional tales. Instead, *storytelling* as used in CIT is a community-centered, identity-building process. Works by Habermas (1987, 1989) and Fisher (1989) point to the idea that decisions and identities are born on the backs of the stories that we tell about ourselves and our surroundings. Our stories create who we are (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006; Stone, 1988) and we rely on our shared narratives to bind us to people and places (Knight, 2009). And so, *storytelling*, which some CIT studies also refer to as *storytelling neighborhood* (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001) or *neighborhood storytelling* (e.g., Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a,

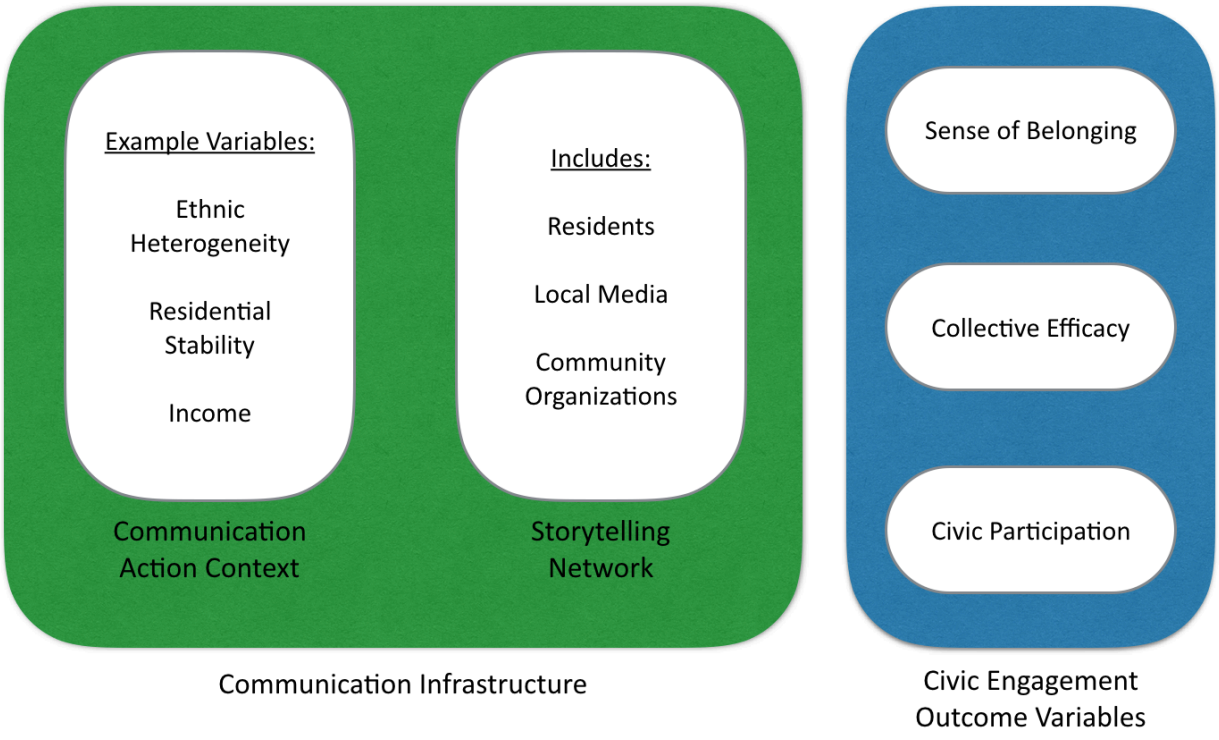
2006b), is a broad range of communicative acts that focus on the community.[18] These acts can take many forms – emails, news articles, over-the-back-fence conversations, social media posts, grocery-store-line banter, dinner-table discussion – all of which constitute *storytelling* so long as the communication is centered on the community. In essence, *storytelling* is CIT shorthand for communication about the community.

A community's communication infrastructure is analogous to its physical infrastructure. Just as roads, bridges, and tunnels allow residents to navigate their city, media outlets, community organizations, and conversations with neighbors allow residents to feel connected to where they live (see Matei et al., 2001, p. 430; also see Kim, Jung, & Ball-Rokeach, 2007, p. 286, for another explanatory analogy). Likewise, if pot-holed streets can impede traffic, a lack of adequate local media coverage can suppress storytelling and the subsequent creation of community. CIT, then, explains the structure of, and influences on, the storytelling environment (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2000; Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001). To do so, the theory divides communication infrastructure into two core elements: the communication action context (CAC) and the storytelling network. Figure 1 illustrates not only this division, but also the three main CIT civic

[18] To be clear, the use of the word "neighborhood" in the term, *neighborhood storytelling*, encompasses communications beyond one's neighborhood. "CIT defines 'neighborhood storytelling' broadly as any type of communicative action that addresses residents, their local communities, and their lives in those communities" (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 178). It was the case that in earlier research, "neighborhood" as used in the term, *storytelling neighborhood*, was used to connote "the active construction of neighborhoods through discourse (Ball-Rokeach et al, 2001). But in general, *storytelling*, in current CIT research refers broadly to community.

engagement variables that are the focus of my analysis and that will be discussed in detail below.

Figure 1. An overview of a communication infrastructure and the civic engagement outcome variables



The CAC is the setting in which stories are created and shared; it is the social, cultural, economic, etc., circumstances in which people live (Matei et al., 2001). It stems from Habermas's (1979, 1984) ideas related to the "preconditions" necessary for the presence of rational discourse in society, or the "structural realities" that affect communication behaviors (Ball-Rokeach, 2000, p. 27). The CAC is also connected to how generally conducive a community is to communication. Ball-Rokeach et al. (2001)

reported that a community with an "open" context is one that encourages discussion, while a "closed" context discourages discussion. Most communities, they suggest, will have a mix of open and closed contexts. Examples of CAC variables include the length of neighborhood residency (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a), a neighborhood's ethnic makeup (Matei et al., 2001), or the accessibility and relative safety of community parks (see Katz, 2014, p. 53).

CAC variables have the power to influence the storytelling network and, in turn, residents' sense of belonging, collective efficacy, and civic participation. In spite of its influencing potential, the CAC remains the less-researched half of CIT (Wilkin, 2013, p. 195). Others, however, have incorporated CAC-like ideas into their studies, including work on community asset mapping (Viallanueva et al., 2016), the power of the "built environment" (Wilkin, 2013; see also Zhang, Motta, & Georgiou, 2018), and how CIT can be combined with the theory of planned behavior in order to better understand how a community's contextual variables affect communication-related beliefs and behaviors (Kim & Shin, 2015).[19]

The CAC consists of "comfort zones" and "hot spots," the former being places, such as a library or a store, where people feel like they belong, and the latter being

[19] Briefly, community asset mapping deals with locating spaces within a community – such as social service organizations – that play a role in the community's well-being. Research dealing with the "built environment" focuses on the buildings, roads, and other physical features within a community and the effect these have on residents. The theory of planned behavior is a psychology-based model used to explain behavioral intentions and, in turn, behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

"places where community members tend to engage each other in conversation" (Wilkin et al., 2011, p. 203). It could be argued that a major league sports team, with its games hosted in large stadiums, could be considered a part of the CAC, particularly if the stadium is a place that engenders belonging and conversation. A major league sports team, however, is more than a stadium and more than just another local business. As I will argue below, a team is a catalyst for conversation and a unique community symbol; it is a city-wide organization that serves as source, object, and site of stories, and for these reasons, my study positions a sports team not as a part of the CAC, but as a storyteller.

The storytelling network is the second core element of CIT. An emphasis must be made on the word *network* in the phrase "storytelling network." It is not the various storytelling agents in isolation that produce the welcome civic effects, but it is the combined influence of the discursive relations among storytellers – the network strength – that creates positive outcomes (e.g., Ball-Rokeach, Kim, & Matei, 2001; Kang, 2013; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; Kim & Kang, 2010; and Kim & Shin, 2015). For example, someone may watch a lot of news, but if she is not also involved in community organizations and talking with others about the community, then the civic benefits of news watching will be limited. Only when people are talking with fellow residents *and* involved in community organizations *and* attentive to local media, will the full benefits of the integrated network be apparent. Kim (2003) developed a formula to measure an individual's links to the storytelling network, called the integrated connectedness to the

storytelling network, or ICSN (see also Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a). With its ability to demonstrate the strength of networked connections among people, organizations, and media, ICSN is a valuable tool that I will use to gauge a sports teams' potential as a storyteller.

Storytellers

There are three storytelling subcategories in CIT: micro, meso, and macro storytelling agents. Micro-level storytellers are residents who talk to each other about the goings on in their area (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001). These are interpersonal conversations about what is happening in the neighborhood (e.g., see Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b) or community (Ognyanova et al, 2013). CIT studies have shown that micro-level storytelling has significant positive relationships with feelings of community belonging (Matei & Ball-Rokeach, 2003), online and offline civic participation (Ognyanova et al., 2013), and positive health behaviors (Wilkin, Katz, Ball-Rokeach, & Hether, 2015).

Although it is implied that family, friends, and neighbors make up the "others" with whom residents talk (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a), traditionally, CIT studies do not drill down and ask survey respondents who these "others" are. An exception is found in Wilkin et al.'s (2009) study, which found that interpersonal discussion amongst Latino family members improved civic engagement and integration into the neighborhood storytelling network. This finding, aside from illuminating a family's influential role in the storytelling network, also provides an example of how CIT's explanatory power is

strengthened as storytelling agents are examined with greater scrutiny, a course I aim to follow in my study by broadening the scope of organizations that are considered influential to the storytelling network. Indeed, Wilkin et al. (2015) concluded "that researchers using the communication infrastructure theory should move beyond considering the influence of the neighborhood storytelling network alone, but to also consider other communication resources that may influence health" (p. 717). Although Wilkin and colleagues were looking specifically at health outcomes, the same could be said for more civically-inclined outcomes such as sense of belonging, perceived collective efficacy, and civic participation.

Meso-level storytellers consist of media and community organizations below the city-wide level. Both provide stories about a neighborhood or community, addressing a portion of the city or a particular group of residents (Matei & Ball-Rokeach, 2003). Meso-level media outlets at the center of many CIT studies (e.g., Ognyanova et al., 2013; Wilkin & Ball-Rokeach, 2006; and Wilkin et al., 2009) focus on what is termed *geo-ethnic media* (see Lin & Song, 2006, p. 364), or hyperlocal[20] media sources that produce information relevant to particular ethnicities or geographic areas (Bobkowski, Jiang, Peterlin, & Rodriguez, 2018). A few examples of potential meso-level media agents include a community newspaper, an online newsletter directed at a particular ethnic group within a city, or a non-English radio station aimed at reaching particular non-

[20] For a CIT-related critique of the notion of "hyperlocal" news, see Zhang (2017).

English-speaking residents. Some geo-ethnic outlets focus their coverage on stories related to the home country, instead of stories related to the locales in which immigrants live (Lin & Song, 2006). Even so, geo-ethnic and neighborhood-centric media outlets, although relatively few in number in most communities (Son & Ball-Rokeach, 2016, p. 114), remain key components of a strong storytelling network and the civic (McLeod et al., 1996; and Paek, Yoon, & Shah, 2005), health-related (Wilkin & Ball-Rokeach, 2006), and disaster-preparedness (Mathew & Kelly, 2008) and disaster-recovery (Spialek, Czlapinski, & Houston, 2016) behaviors the network encourages (Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2011).

Community organizations are the other meso-level storytelling agents. Such organizations are an integral part of the storytelling network because they are not only gathering places, but because they tell stories about the history, people, issues, problems, and opportunities shared by those living in a community, and by so doing, allow for the creation of a "we" and "us" (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 178). As storytelling agents, then, they can serve as a site of storytelling, as well as the source and object of stories.

CIT takes a particular perspective on *community organizations*, defining them "all the way from informal grassroots formations to formal nonprofit organizations" (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a, p. 414). When assessing ties to these meso-level storytellers, CIT researchers typically ask residents if they "belong to" (e.g., Kim & Kang, 2010; Nah & Yamamoto, 2017) or are "members of" (e.g., Kim et al., 2015) particular

community organizations, including recreational, religious, cultural, homeowner's, political, and educational groups, among others. Most CIT studies that focus on civic engagement, in fact, use the same "which community organizations do you belong to?" question formulated in the earliest CIT-related studies (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001; Matei & Ball-Rokeach, 2003). As with the other storytelling variables already discussed, organizational belonging has been shown to be positively related to civic engagement (e.g., Jung, Toriumu, & Mizukoshi, 2013; Putnam, 2000).

However, by only asking respondents about their ties to organizations and groups to which they can belong or have a formal membership, CIT may be missing other influences on residents' storytelling networks, namely organizations that do not allow for formal membership or belonging. This will be discussed in more detail as I now turn to macro-level storytellers.

Macro-level storytellers are city-wide, national, or international organizations and media outlets (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b). These macro agents are generally not factored into the storytelling network (exceptions being Kim & Shin, 2015, p. 7; Kim et al., 2015). In fact, there is a conceptual differentiation between a "storytelling system" – which consists of macro-, meso-, and micro-level storytellers (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001), and a "storytelling network" – which consists of only meso- and micro-level storytellers. The omission of macro level storytelling agents from the "storytelling network" is explained thusly: "CIT focuses on meso- and microstorytellers. This is because, in the contemporary metropolitan urban environment in the United States, macrostorytellers

– including mainstream newspapers, radio stations, and TV channels – have failed to play the role of community storyteller" (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 179). Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006b), in arguing against the inclusion of macro-level agents in the storytelling network, based their reasoning on work done by Bagdikian (1997) and McChesney (1999). In their scholarship, Bagdikian and McChesney both presented compelling arguments that ongoing media conglomeratization hurts local reporting through a focus on stories that appeal to general audiences *and* through a decrease in small media outlets that report on community-relevant events. When attending to mass media, people hear relatively few stories about matters related to their immediate communities. Nevertheless, some CIT-study participants have been asked about attention to national media, with an acknowledgment that locally-relevant information can come from macro-level agents (e.g., Kim & Shin, 2015, p. 7; Kim et al., 2015).

Although Bagdikian's (1997) and McChesney's (1999) media-focused studies support the idea of downplaying the community storytelling power of macro-level *media* outlets, they fail to support the de-emphasis of macro-level *organizations* from consideration. This de-emphasis, I suggest, unnecessarily limits CIT's explanatory power as it pertains to the role of organizations, particularly if one of the main roles of community organizations is to "serve as catalysts for micro-level storytelling" as Ball-Rokeach et al. (2001, p. 399) have suggested. This being the case, it would seem that some macro-level organizations could fulfill such a catalyzing role. For example, as symbols of their cities (Heere & James, 2007; O'Rourke, 2003; see also Danielson, 2001,

p. 8), sports teams could serve as effectual storytelling agents, providing a source and subject of stories that shape how people feel about, and engage in, their communities.

Yet, measuring residents' ties to macro-level organizations has been absent from CIT studies. This is a result of not only explicitly excluding consideration of macro-level organizational influence on the storytelling network, but also because of how residents' organizational connections are measured. As noted, the standard CIT organizational-connection measurement implies that residents have formal membership in service, non-profit, recreational, and other similar organizations or groups that exist below the city-wide level. Framing organizational relationships in this way precludes a number of potential storytelling organizations from consideration, not the least of which are city-wide organizations that do not lend themselves to formal membership or belonging. For example, a resident may be a *member* of a local softball team and *belong* to a school's Parent Teacher Association, but there is no similar ability to be a member of, or belong to, the local major league sports franchise. Although my study does not explicitly suggest that the "storytelling network" conceptualization should change to include macro-level agents, my study does seek to further CIT by explaining how a macro-level storyteller can contribute to civic engagement and integration into the storytelling network. A major league sports team's referent may be an entire city, but that does not mean that city residents cannot use the stories generated by and about the team to build bridges among neighbors, feel more like they belong to their community, and have a greater desire to serve others within the portion of the city that they call home.

Two things to note: First, unlike the finite definition applied to meso-level community organizations, macro-level storytelling agents have been defined more broadly. The latter have been described as being city-wide, national, and even international in scope (e.g., Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 179). I suggest that lumping all of these geographic designations into one category does not allow for the appreciation of different effects based on an organization's geographic and symbolic proximity to a particular metropolitan area. For example, it would not make sense to consider a local City Hall to have the same community storytelling impact as the United Nations. Yet, both fall into the current conceptualization of a macro-level storyteller. This being the case, for clarity's sake, my consideration of *macro* storytelling agents is limited to *city-wide* organizations and, at least for this dissertation, major league sports teams. The potential impact of national and international storytelling agents are studies for another day.

Second, although many CIT studies have focused on what happens at a neighborhood level, other studies, including mine, have examined larger geographic areas. Los Angeles' ethnic neighborhoods were the initial focus of CIT research (see Son & Ball-Rokeach, 2016, for a comprehensive list of L.A. neighborhoods that have been studied), and much CIT-related work has remained focused on these neighborhoods. This is due to the important connection between CIT and the Metamorphosis Project (e.g., Ball-Rokeach et al., 2000; Son & Ball-Rokeach, 2016), a project focused on understanding urban transformation in L.A. and which is housed at the University of

Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.[21] With the passage of time, CIT has not only been applied to other neighborhoods in places like Atlanta (Wilkin, Stringer, O'Quinn, & Montgomery, 2010) and Tokyo (Jung, Toriumu, & Mizukoshi, 2013), but also beyond individual ethnic neighborhoods. The theory has been used to examine entire regions (Savage et al., 2018) and cities, from Tuscaloosa (Kim & Kang, 2010) to Chicago (Yamamoto, 2018). For example, studies in Seoul, a relatively homogenous metropolitan city, have found the central proposition of CIT – that increased connectedness to a storytelling network is related to beneficial civic and personal outcomes – still holds true (Kim et al., 2015, p. 19; see also Junk & Kim, 2018; and Kim & Shin, 2015). Of course, cities are generally made up of many different ethnic and cultural groups, and even when they are living in similar communication environments, these different groups are not all affected in the same ways (Liu et al., 2017). It is possible that a team could also have distinctive effects on different ethnic groups within the same community. It is also possible that sports' ability to transcend language and cultural barriers[22] could foster intergroup relations among different ethnic groups. These ideas are beyond the scope of this dissertation, but would be worthwhile

[21] The Project's mission is "to understand the transformation of urban community under the forces of globalization, new communication technologies, and population diversity so that our research can inform practitioner and policy maker decisions." Retrieved from: http://www.metamorph.org/about/overview/mission/

[22] It would also be worth examining how geo-ethnic media covers local major league sports teams, particularly when the local team has a player of a shared ethnic origin (e.g., a Los Angeles based Japanese-language newspaper that covers the Los Angeles Angels Japanese player, Shohei Ohtani), and how such coverage effects ethnic residents' feelings and behaviors related to their community.

for future study, particularly considering sports' ability to transcend language and cultural barriers. With all that being said, there is precedent for applying CIT to research, like this dissertation, that looks at cities as a whole.

Civic Engagement

CIT studies have shown, time and again, that having a strong network of storytellers – individuals, media outlets, and community organizations – leads to beneficial individual effects, including an increase in sense of belonging, perceived collective efficacy, and civic participation. Taken together, these three outcomes constitute "civic engagement" as the term is used in CIT studies (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 188). CIT findings have consistently shown that these beliefs and behaviors increase as connections to the storytelling network increase. I provide a brief overview of each civic engagement variable here.

Belonging is seen as the most important of the three civic engagement factors, as it presages perceived efficacy and civic action (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 189). In fact, when Ball-Rokeach, Kim, and Matei (2001) introduced CIT, they referred to it as "a communication infrastructure model *of belonging*" (p. 392, emphasis mine). Although some scholars have indicated that urban areas are places where people feel poorly connected to place and others (e.g., Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1996; Putnam, 1995), Ball-Rokeach et al. (2001) suggested instead that certain communicative behaviors can create places where people not only experience individualism, but also a communitarian sense of "we" (see Durkheim, 2008). This is an idea akin to work on

sense of community by psychologists' McMillan and Chavis (1986), who wrote: "Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). In this vein, CIT studies have continued to ask participants questions related to how they feel about (e.g., Kang, 2013), and what they do with, their neighbors (e.g., Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; Wilkin et al., 2009).

Based on collective efficacy work done by Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997), among others, Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a) defined perceived collective efficacy "as individuals' perceptions of their neighbors' willingness to participate in neighborhood problem solving" (p. 416). Collective efficacy first appeared as a dependent variable in Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a), and it has been a mainstay of civic-engagement-related CIT studies, with findings consistently showing that the greater the connections to the storytelling network, the greater the perceptions of collective efficacy (e.g., Kang, 2013; Kim & Shin, 2015; Wilkin et al., 2009; Yamamoto, 2018). Collective efficacy is important because it is a belief that is strongly associated with accomplishment – groups believing that they can accomplish something are more likely to succeed at a task than groups who lack such a belief (e.g., Bandura, 1993; see also Bandura, 1999).[23] This relationship between perceived collective efficacy and

[23] In addition, collective efficacy is shown to increase as people serve together in their communities (Ohmer, 2007).

accomplishment has been demonstrated in research related to community safety (Klein & Maxson, 2006; Sampson et al., 1997), political participation (Craig, 1979; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988), and sports teams, where collegiate hockey teams' collective efficacy was a positive predictor of team success (Feltz & Lirgg, 1998).

Civic participation, as initially introduced in relation to CIT, refers to mostly political actions, such as attending a city council meeting or taking part in a protest (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; see also McLeod et al., 1996). The proposed relationship between CIT and civic participation works like this: as people become more connected to the community storytelling network, they are more likely to have information about community issues and, subsequently, what can be done about them.[24] CIT studies have found evidence of this connection (Kang, 2013; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; Kim et al., 2015; Nah & Yamamoto, 2017; Wilkin et al., 2009) across a variety of measures used to gauge civic participation (e.g., Kang, 2013; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; Kim et al., 2015; Wilkin et al., 2009).

Although the traditional CIT civic participation measure focuses on political activities (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a), other scholars have envisioned civic participation to include, or be limited to, a host of non-political factors. Some have conceptualized civic participation – at times also referred to as civic or community engagement – to be

[24] It should be noted that just because someone is aware of civic issues, and has the desire and knowledge to address them, they still may lack the resources to do so (Bronfenbrenner, 1960; Delli Carpini, 2000; McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

equated almost exclusively with political activities like voting or canvassing a neighborhood in support of a political candidate (e.g., Delli Carpini, 2000; Norris, 2001; Sloam, 2014). At other times, however, civic participation means a mix of political activities such as taking part in a protest or march, along with ostensibly apolitical activities such as volunteering for a local charitable organization (e.g., Nah, Namkoong, Chen, & Hustedde, 2016; Nah & Yamamoto, 2017; Skocpol & Fiorina, 2004; Xenos & Moy, 2007). Additionally, civic participation has also been conceptualized as activities solely outside the realm of politics such as doing volunteer work or going to a club meeting (e.g., Campbell, 2006; Shah, Cho, Eveland, & Kwak, 2005; Uslaner & Brown, 2005; Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, & Delli Carpini, 2006). Although attempts have been made to remedy this conceptual confusion (Adler & Goggin, 2005), no single accepted definition exists among scholars (Gil de Zúñiga, Copeland, & Bimber, 2014). Instead, each study defines civic participation as it will be used in that particular study. For this reason, I will look at civic participation more broadly than CIT research has in the past, namely as a mixture of activities occurring within and outside the political realm, details of which will be presented in the next chapter.

Interaction among storytellers should not only lead to increases in sense of belonging, collective efficacy, and civic participation, but also be positively related to integration into the storytelling network as a whole. Sports teams, as already pointed out, provide residents with increased opportunities to talk and encounter (in-person

and mediated) information about a city-wide organization. By definition,[25] these opportunities, when taken, lead residents to be more strongly integrated into the storytelling network. Such was the finding for Wilkin et al. (2009) as they studied the relationship between family interaction and civic engagement. Family interaction was positively related to the three CIT civic engagement variables as well as to integration into the storytelling network. Their finding, that "talk and resource sharing within families… lead[s] to opportunities to interact with other residents" (Wilkin et al., 2009, p. 391), may be similar to what happens when residents engage with the city's sports team: it increases interaction with others and exposure to community stories, leading to residents' increased integration into their storytelling networks.

My proposition, that a sports team's presence can have a beneficial effect on residents' civic beliefs and behaviors, rests on the assumption that talking about sports can translate into talking about civic engagement and the community. This assumption is grounded not only in existing communication, psychology, and political science research, but also in Altman and Taylor's (1973) social penetration theory. I review these literatures in the following paragraphs.

It should be noted that the majority of studies that examine the content of engagement-centered talk focus on political campaigns (e.g., Pan, Shen, Paek, & Sun, 2006) or formal, deliberative settings, such as community meetings organized by local

[25] In speaking of a definition, I am referring to the integrated connectedness to the storytelling network (ICSN) equation, which will be discussed in detail in the method section.

nonprofits (see Delli Carpini, Cook, & Jacobs, 2004). Few are the studies that look at how civic discussions fit into the larger context of informal, everyday conversations. Wyatt, Katz, and Kim (2000) provided one of these rare exceptions. In their investigation of informal political talk, they performed an exploratory factor analysis on data related to nine different conversational topics. They found that those who talked about education and crime – the latter being one of the most important topics of neighborhood concern (Cottler et al., 2013) – also talked frequently about sports.[26] Not only did these three topics load onto the same factor, but they also fit into a broader conclusion that in both public and private settings, informal conversations tended to float from topic to topic instead of being focused on a single subject:

> Interlocutors shift readily from the discussion of political issues to aimless chat to conversation about personal issues…. Here, political topics are discussed, and sometimes debated, together with other common events such as a spate of airline accidents, the quality of a movie, the cause of a child's failing grades, or the prowess of the local coach. (p. 88)

This finding, that conversation topics are intermingled, was confirmed by Wojcieszak and Mutz (2009), albeit for discussions that occur in online settings, and Sehulster

[26] Factor analysis of nine different conversation topics found that political topics and the economy loaded onto one factor, while crime, education, sports, and religion loaded onto a second factor.

(2006), who found positive relationships between community-related talk and sports talk.[27]

Not only can sports be one of many topics covered in the course of a wide-ranging discussion, but it can also act as a conversational lubricant that leads to talk about other topics, including politics. For a period of more than three years, Walsh (2004) researched the connection between informal groups and political talk by observing a variety of informal gatherings (e.g., meetups in a local corner store). She found that political talk arose naturally during the course of everyday conversations, and *not* as the result of people getting together to talk specifically about politics. "Much political interaction occurs not among people who make a point to specifically talk about politics but emerges instead from the social processes of people chatting with one another" (p. 35). Furthermore, she noted that sports talk was a primary motivation for many to participate in conversations.[28] In a similar fashion, Gil de Zúñiga, Valenzuela, and Weeks (2016) concluded that a variety of non-political motivations, such as a desire to get to know someone better, could contribute to political discussions that lead to civic engagement (see also Gil de Zúñiga & Valenzuela, 2011). They noted that, "so long

[27] Unlike those of Wyatt, Katz, and Kim (2000), loadings for Sehulster's (2009) five different conversational factors were not always clear, particularly for sports. Said another way, the items that Sehulster sets forth as being associated with sports do not always have strong similarities in their loadings, suggesting that caution should be exercised in interpreting some of his sports-related findings (see also Aries & Johnson, 1983, pp. 1194-1195).

[28] I recognize that Walsh's (2004) work centers on political talk, but inasmuch as some of my civic engagement measures refer to political actions, I feel her findings bolster my sports-talk-to-engagement-talk assumption.

as [non-civic motivations] promote conversations among citizens, [the non-civic motivations] may well offer an indirect path to a stronger citizenship" (p. 547, emphasis mine). Gil de Zúñiga et al. were looking specifically at motivations for political discussion, but their finding fits into two larger ideas that emerge from the studies cited thus far: (a) conversational topics intermingle, and (b) one key to promoting civic discussions is simply to get people to talk with one another (see Bakalar, 2014). To this latter point, Yamamoto (2018), using a CIT framework to study how collective efficacy is generated, came to a similar conclusion about the power of informal communication to foster greater ties among community residents. Certainly, not every sports discussion will turn into talk about local political candidates or a community need. And some people purposefully avoid sharing their political opinions, particularly with others with whom they know they will disagree (Cowan & Baldassarri, 2017). In spite of this, sports talk is a regular part of a conversational milieu that also includes exchanges about more pressing community matters. Inasmuch as sports can help promote conversation and connections among others, it has the potential to lead to beneficial, civic-related talk.[29]

The mechanism by which sports talk can lead to engagement talk is unknown, but social penetration theory provides a possible explanation. Developed by Altman and

[29] With its emphasis on civic outcomes, this CIT-focused dissertation highlights how sports and sports talk forge community and encourage civic action. This emphasis should not be mistaken, however, for a slight at the value of sports talk for the sake of sports talk. Conversations centered on sports have a power and merit in their own right, particularly as they allow people to share a mutual interest and enjoy the company of others (Raney, 2006).

Taylor (1973) through their work in the field of interpersonal relationship development, the theory posits that communication changes as relationships progress. This change proceeds in stages, with early conversations that are focused on less personal topics making possible later conversations that embrace more personal topics (Svennevig, 1999, p. 137). Although social penetration theory does not prove my assumption, it does support the idea that sports can act as a vehicle by which people can become comfortable talking about deeper subjects. Such was the case for Walsh's (2004) informal groups, who used sports and other informal topics as precursors to conversations about politics and other more personal matters. In the end, although new neighbors or coworkers may not immediately share their opinions on community concerns or politics (see Morey, Eveland, & Hutchens, 2012), such disclosure can proceed after relational ties have been formed by talking about less delicate topics, including sports.

All of the above leads to my first hypothesis, which is, to sum up the chapter thus far, grounded in the idea that major league sports teams act as storytellers that help residents build connections with each other and with their community. To measure these connections, I turn to CIT, and examine how residents in cities with major league sports teams differ from residents in similar cities without major league teams. Hence, my first hypothesis is:

> H1: Those living in a city with a major league sports team will have greater (a) sense of belonging, (b) collective efficacy, (c) civic participation, and (d)

integration into the storytelling network compared to those living in a city without a major league sports team.

Sports and Fandom

At this point, it is worth considering what to make of those who don't attend to sports, and those who are not ardent, or even casual fans. Indeed, there are plenty of people who do not see the question, "did you see the game?" as an accessible conversation starter. Yet, even for the non-fan, the potential remains for a city's team(s) to affect an individual's storytelling network and subsequent community-related beliefs and actions. Several theories, specifically social contagion and incidental exposure, tell us that those who avoid sports information may still come in contact with, and be affected by the presence of, their city's major league sports teams.

At its core, social contagion theory proposes that a person may adopt an idea or action based on their social or physical proximity to others who have already adopted the ideas or actions (Burt, 1987). In this case, non-fans, "[believing] that they should find value in the same ideas and behaviors" of those in their social network (Burt & Janicik, 1996, p. 32), may be influenced to attend or watch a game, buy a team shirt, or view a victory parade. These and other actions, while not necessarily turning the non-fan into a fan, nevertheless expose the non-fan to the team and make the team an accessible resource for storytelling.

Even those who do not succumb to social contagion may still become aware of the team and its fortunes through the process of incidental exposure. As its name

suggests, this theory is centered on the idea that people learn about things to which they do not pay purposeful attention (Janiszewski, 1988). Research in this area has focused on exposure to advertising (Huang & Huh, 2017; and Shapiro, MacInnis, & Heckler, 1997) and news (Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2010). Although incidental exposure does not always lead to increases in knowledge (Tewksbury, Weaver, & Maddex, 2001), there is still a robust body of evidence suggesting that people become aware of (Ferraro, Bettman, & Chartrand, 2009; Lee & Kim, 2017), and have an increased affinity toward (Janiszewski, 1993), information and brands at the periphery of their attention. Kim, Chen, and Gil de Zúñiga (2013) have shown that incidental exposure is positively related to political participation. It follows, then, that non-fans' awareness, beliefs, and behaviors may be affected by incidental exposure to team-related media coverage and advertising.

Furthermore, the "built environment" – the city's buildings, parks, and other infrastructure (Halpern, 1995, pp. 1-2) – could also play a role in incidental exposure. Non-fans may pass by stadiums that loom large over a city skyline, or drive over bridges or roads named after famous players or coaches. The 30-mile stretch of Interstate 30 that connects Dallas to Fort Worth is named after the late Dallas Cowboys football coach, Tom Landry, and road signs and overpasses are festooned with depictions of the fedora that Landry famously wore throughout his coaching career. For 15 years in Sacramento, the top of an art-deco television broadcast tower that rises over downtown would glow purple on nights when the Kings – Sacramento's major league basketball

team – won a game. Wilkin (2013) suggested that CIT researchers should "identify the elements of the built environment that enable or constrain residents' connections to communication resources," (p. 195), and these are just two examples of how a team's presence may play a role in building those connections, whether exposure is incidental or otherwise.

If non-fans could be affected by the presence of a sports team, then fans – those who purposefully attend to and identify with sports teams – may be especially susceptible to the presence of a city's team. Foundational scholarly research on sports fans suggests that being a fan is not a one-size-fits-all prospect. Pooley (1978) described a range from *spectator* to *fan*, the former quickly forgetting their sports encounters with the latter devoting portions of every day to a team or sport. Fans' allegiance to their team comes in a variety of shades, from the temporary and local, to the fanatical and dysfunctional (Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999). In their definitive academic treatise on sports fandom, psychologists Funk and James (2001) created a framework that places people along a four-level continuum, increasing in fandom from awareness to attraction to attachment to allegiance. The closer to allegiance, the more likely people are to believe that their team possesses special qualities that set them apart from other teams (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Sports fans are prone to wishful thinking (Babad, 1987). Some "bask in the reflected glory" (BIRGing) of winning teams (Cialdini, et al., 1976) and "cut off the reflected failure" (CORFing) of losers (Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986;

Wann & Branscombe, 1990).[30] At times it is a team's record that determines fan loyalty, and at other times (particularly when a team is losing), loyalty is drawn from an identification with team aspects other than the outcome of games, such as a fan's attraction to a team's star player (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Although poorly-performing franchises may attract fewer bandwagon, or casual, fans (Burger & Walters, 2003), they nonetheless retain those fans who feel a sense of loyalty to the team and the city that the team represents (see Uszynski, 2013).

To sum up the discussion on fans and non-fans, for the former, a team is a focal point of time and energy, while for the latter, the team exists on the periphery of interest and attention (Funk & James, 2001; Pooley, 1978). For fans, the team provides accessible stories that can be shared with others in the community, and the added attention to the team means fans have more team-related simultaneous experiences than non-fans. Thus, fans would be more likely than non-fans to benefit from the storytelling potential of their city's major league sports franchises, and, in turn, more likely to exhibit increased civic engagement-related thoughts and behaviors. All of which leads me to my second hypothesis:

[30] These two terms – BIRGing and CORFing – are related to fan identity and team success. When teams are successful, some fans will "bask in the reflected glory" as evidenced by describing the team using the "we" pronoun (e.g., "Did you see the A's play last night? *We* really destroyed those Yankees"). On the other hand, when a team is not successful, some fans will "cut off the reflected failure" and use pronouns like "they" or "them" to describe the team (e.g., "Did you see the A's play last night? *They* really stunk up the place").

H2: In cities with major league sports teams, fan strength will be positively related to (a) sense of belonging, (b) collective efficacy, (c) civic participation, and (d) integration into the storytelling network.

Negative aspects of having a major league team

Up to this point, this dissertation has emphasized the benefits that a team's presence can bring to a city and its residents. But to ignore some of the negative aspects of major league sports teams would be unfair. These include the costs – financial and social – that come with stadium construction, the violence that can occur in a game's aftermath, and sports' potential to be a divisive, rather than a unifying, force in the lives of community members.

When a major league sports stadium is built or renovated, team owners frequently seek public financing from local governments to cover all or the majority of the costs. Owners and other proponents of using public money for construction tout the expected economic returns of such expenditures, as well as the desirable image that comes with being a "big league city" (see Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000). Rare, however, are the occasions when financial benefits are realized (e.g., Coates, 2015). Opponents of public financing argue that even if economic benefits were to be realized, public money should be used to bolster public goods, such as education and infrastructure (see Friedman, Andrews, & Silk, 2004), and that since sports teams are money-making

private entities,[31] team owners should use private funds for construction costs. As for the argument that a team's presence improves a city's image, Eckstein and Delaney (2002) noted that public-financing proponents warn that without new or upgraded stadiums, teams will move to other cities, resulting in a substantial downgrade in a city's image (see Smith & Ingham, 2003). Warnings include: Cleveland will be "just like Akron," Phoenix "another Tucson," and Minneapolis and Denver "colder version[s] of Omaha" (Eckstein & Delaney, pp. 240-241). Opponents question whether such an image is worth the hundreds of millions of dollars municipalities are asked to pay (Notte, 2017).

Beyond influencing debates about a city's finances or image, stadium construction also shapes a city's physical landscape and can result in the dislocation of individual residents and the erasure of entire neighborhoods (Friedman et al., 2004; Friedman & Andrews, 2010; Newman, 1999). In some cases, the displacement is a straightforward result of homes being demolished to make room for a stadium. More frequently, however, longstanding neighborhood cultures, generally belonging to ethnic minorities or the economically disadvantaged, are displaced or destroyed because of rising property values and shifting demographics around newly constructed stadiums (Knapp & Vojnovic, 2013; Podagrosi & Vojnovic, 2008). Construction supporters extoll the benefits of "urban renewal" and "reversing urban decline" (Rosentraub, 2014),

[31] All MLB, NBA, NFL, and NHL teams are privately owned, with one exception: the NFL's Green Bay Packers. For more information, see www.packers.com/history/birth-of-a-team-and-a-legend.html and https://thepowersweep.com/blog/green-bay-101-who-owns-the-packers

while often trivializing the sacrifices of those being displaced (Butterworth, 2010; Podagrosi & Vojnovic, 2008), thus neglecting to calculate the personal and social costs that some are forced to pay in the name of having a "big league city."

Once a stadium is built and the athletic contests commence, cities at times must contend with eruptions of fan violence. The most conspicuous form of fan violence in the United States, the one with the greatest community-wide impact, occurs during post-victory celebrations (Lewis, 2007).[32] These generally celebratory experiences can take on elements of rioting, with cars being overturned, windows smashed, streetlights pulled down, and so on. Although typically directed at inanimate objects,[33] the violence at times is directed at other people, resulting in injuries and, rarely, deaths (e.g., see Levin, 1990).[34] In the wake of celebratory riots, cities must not only deal with negative media coverage, but also with the financial burdens related to lawsuits (e.g., Brown, 2014), law enforcement costs (Russell, 2004), and infrastructure repairs. Outside of celebratory rioting, fan violence can also be manifest as altercations between individuals or small groups at a stadium, a bar, and at other locations, including in the

[32] Lewis (2007) noted that these "celebratory riots" are the opposite of typical sports-related rioting in Europe, which generally occurs following a team's loss (what Lewis terms, "punishing riots").
[33] European sports rioting typically involves more fighting and injuries than U.S. riots, a finding attributed to a host of factors (Roberts & Benjamin, 2000), including that some European teams are associated with particular races or religions, which is typically not the case in U.S. sports (Bradley, 1996; Ward 2002).
[34] Violent fan behaviors are not attributed to a single cause, but instead to a mix of individual, interpersonal, situational, environmental, and societal factors (Russell, 2004; Spaaij, 2014; see also Williams, 2017). One of the news media's commonly cited causes of fan violence is alcohol consumption (e.g., Raskin & Kekatos, 2018), but little research has been done to either show or refute this claim. In his meta-analysis of fan violence research, Ostrowsky (2016), looking for evidence of an alcohol/sports-violence link, concluded that this link most likely exists and urged further research in this area.

home (Adubato, 2016; Card & Dahl, 2011). With few exceptions,[35] however, these smaller instances typically do not rise to the level of community awareness. While not minimizing the impact that sports riots and other related violence can have on individuals, families, and communities, it is important to remember that the vast majority of victories are celebrated in relative peace, and most fans are neither victims nor perpetrators of fan violence.

Major league sports also have the potential to be divisive rather than unifying by creating expectations of what constitutes acceptable citizenship. Butterworth (2010) argued that Major League Baseball, particularly in the games played following the 9/11 attacks, foregrounded rituals that proscribed what it meant to be a patriotic American, leaving little room for those who, for example, did not support the "war on terror." Thus, instead of the game and its rituals providing a unifying element for all, some fans may instead feel that they do not have a place in the stadium – and by extension, in the larger community – if their views do not conform to those being communicated on the field via the anthems, flag-waving, etc. This potential for division is also evident in recent protests in which athletes – mostly black athletes in the National Football League – have knelt during the playing of the national anthem (Kenning, 2018).[36]

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[35] One notable exception was the 2011 beating of San Francisco Giants fan, Brian Stow, by two Los Angeles Dodgers fans outside of Dodger Stadium. Stow, in a coma for nine months, was left permanently disabled. National news coverage led not only to policing changes at Dodger Stadium, but also to community actions in Los Angeles and the Bay Area in support of Stow's recovery (Simon, 2016).

[36] Although anthem protests by athletes are not new (Johnk, 2017), their recent ubiquity, particularly during the 2017 NFL season, garnered headlines across major non-sports-focused news outlets (e.g., Corey, 2017) and incited conversation and debate among fans and non-fans alike (e.g., Wilkens, 2017).

Without diminishing their detrimental effects, the negatives mentioned in the preceding paragraphs do offer a storytelling-related positive in that they could provide jumping off points for community conversations and civic action. For example, Brown and Paul (2002), studying 40 different U.S. major league sports stadium referenda between 1984-2000, found that these sports facility referenda "generated large turnouts for rallies, floods of opinion letters to local newspapers, and record levels of voter turnout on Election Day" (p. 259). If there is a concern that time spent consuming sports constitutes a distraction (see Potoski & Urbatsch,[37] 2017; Rose & Friedman, 1994), drawing people's attention away from matters more consequential than a game's outcome (see Delli Carpini, 2014), then votes on stadium financing, rallies about construction, fundraisers to support victims of fan violence, and conversations about athlete protests, offer hope that even while attending to sports, people's attention could be turned away from the box score toward the civic arena and public life. In sum, major league teams provide a city's residents with a variety of stories that create opportunities for dialog and togetherness that go beyond the game itself.

[37] Potoski and Urbatsch (2017) detected a significant negative relationship between the quality of an NFL Monday Night Football (MNF) game and turnout for U.S. general elections between 1970 and 2014. These effects, seen across the U.S. population, were less consistent when looking at how having a local team playing in the MNF game affected residents in the team's metropolitan area; in sum, their finding held nationally, but wavered locally. Additionally, their analyses did not account for differences based on locality (i.e., they relied on logistic regression instead of hierarchical linear modeling) and their reliance on secondary data precluded them from knowing an individual's attachment to the teams playing in the MNF games. My study takes locality differences and individual team attachment into account as I investigate how teams affect civic engagement at the local level.

Team Performance

Returning to the more positive aspects of having a major league team, beyond differences related to fandom, civic engagement also may be affected by a team's on-field performance. Miller (2013) found that a winning record for a city's major league sports team boosted incumbent mayors' vote totals and chances of reelection. Sports records, in fact, were a better indicator of re-election than the city's unemployment rate. Miller suggested that the effect was related to winning teams creating more positive moods in the city (see Lee, Bryan, & LaPlant, 2017), but I am not convinced that a playoff victory in January, for example, would continue to produce positive moods in November. As an alternative explanation, I suggest that winning or losing has different effects on the storytelling network and civic engagement outcomes. For example, sense of belonging is about building bridges that connect people to one another (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b). Sports teams – especially successful ones (Cook, 1969; see also Funk & James, 2001) – do this by creating a broad in-group among a city's diverse population, allowing people the opportunity to find common ground (Hoye, Nicholson, & Brown, 2015) even among those who have little else in common (including language, as sports can transcend language barriers; see Chen et al., 2012, p. 945). Particularly among fans – who are prone to greater use of the pronoun "we" to describe a winning team (Cialdini et al., 1976) – sports teams help create the imagined community (Anderson, 1991) or sense of "we" (Durkheim, 2008; see also Vickhoff et al., 2013) that is at the heart of a communication infrastructure (a suggestion apparent in the quotation from Houston

Mayor Sylvester Turner at the beginning of this chapter). Since volunteerism increases among those who see similarities amongst others in their community (see Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005), people are much more likely to cooperate with one another (Mitkidis et al., 2013) and serve their community together when they share a common bond and are united by the common goal of seeing their team win.

Of course, fans can and do form strong bonds around unsuccessful franchises. Few could dismiss the loyalty of fan communities that, in spite of decades of disappointment, continue(d) to gather around the Cleveland Browns, the Buffalo Bills, the pre-2004 Boston Red Sox, the pre-2016 Chicago Cubs, and other losing franchises. Stories are created and perpetuated by losing teams just as they are by winning teams (O'Rourke, 2003). Yet, it has been shown that teams do attract different types and numbers of fans depending on whether a team is winning or losing (Burger & Walters, 2003).[38] Casual fans are less likely to attend to teams when team performance is poor, potentially reducing some of the positive storytelling effects that major league sports can bring to a city. At the very least, losing teams may fail to project the winning behaviors that inspire collective efficacy.

[38] As an extreme example, at the conclusion of the 2018 NFL season, two NFL teams held parades, the Philadelphia Eagles and the Cleveland Browns. The Eagles parade, held to celebrate a Super Bowl victory, was attended by 700,000 people (Avril, 2018). The Browns parade was held to commemorate the team's "perfect season," in which they *lost* each of the 16 games they played in 2017; it was attended by roughly 3,000 people (Bamforth, 2018). Certainly, the Browns have a well-documented and loyal fan community (Uszynski, 2013), but it must be acknowledged that winning teams and losing teams typically attract different amounts and types of fans and media coverage (Burger & Walters, 2003).

Indeed, collective efficacy is a characteristic of successful sports teams (Myers, Feltz, & Short, 2004). Since one of the best ways to increase perceptions of collective efficacy is to see it modeled by others (Bandura, 1982, pp. 126-127; see also Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a, p. 416), it follows that those who attend to winning teams are learning what it looks like to work together to accomplish a goal. This notion is exemplified in Lipsyte's (1977) recounting of the New York Mets improbable 1969 World Series victory:

> By the time the Mets won it all, got their ticker-tape parade and the keys to the city, it seemed as if the ball-club had actually pounded a few more beats into New York's sick old heart. Anyway, that's what the press told us. We're gonna be all right. If the Mets can do it, so can New York. (p. 11)

When given opportunities to witness success, residents may translate the modeled behavior of winning teams into believing that they can work together to tackle issues and into action to better their communities.

When the findings of the previous few paragraphs on team performance are taken together, winning teams should have a greater positive impact on CIT civic engagement variables than losing teams. This leads to my third hypothesis:

> H3: (a) Sense of belonging, (b) collective efficacy, (c) civic participation, and (d) integration into the storytelling network are positively related to team success.

If, as I argue, my third hypothesis is true, then the relationship between team performance and civic participation should be detectable beyond the self-reported measures used in my original survey. To this end, I turn to data from two outside

sources: the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and publicly available U.S. tax documents filed by local chapters of the United Way. These data sources contain information related to volunteerism and charitable donations in the metropolitan areas under investigation, enabling additional tests of the association between franchise success and civic participation. Hence, I propose the following fourth and final hypothesis:

> H4: (a) Volunteer rates and (b) charitable donations are positively related to team success.

Gender and Sports

Although sports fans differ in key ways from those who are not, fans are demographically diverse. A 2015 Gallup survey found that fifty-nine percent of Americans self-identify as sports fans (Jones, 2015). I include these fan data in Table 1 to highlight that those interested in sports represent a majority of Americans across diverse demographic groups. Fans are found among the young and the old, whites and nonwhites, city slickers and suburbanites, liberals and conservatives (see also Crompton, 2004, p. 49), suggesting that sports teams may have the potential to make compatriots out of not just any group of strangers, but *every* group of strangers.[39] This matters

[39] While this may be the case, I still control for many of these demographic variables in my analyses, so as to be sure to uncover how demographics account for any differences in the civic engagement outcome variables. Controlling for these variables is important because, for example, it has been shown that some professional leagues and teams may attract fans of modestly differing political ideologies (see Hickey, 2013; Paine, Enten, & Jones-Rooy, 2017). My analyses will control for political ideology for this reason.

because a team's ability to bring together a diverse group of people means that a common, accessible story could be forged that can be told in communities throughout the city.[40] Certainly, there are also stories of city-wide significance coming from, for example, City Hall, a major employer, or a cultural center. But how many of these stories are accessible to, and welcomed by, a group as large or diverse as those who attend to the city's sports team?

The largest gap within a demographic group in the 2015 Gallup data – 15% – is between men and women, a difference that warrants additional discussion. Gantz and Wenner (1991) showed that attention to sporting events was greater for men than women, yet others have shown that in certain professional sports leagues – including the National Football League and Major League Soccer, male and female fandom is almost on par (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000). Furthermore, Wenner and Gantz (1998) looked at television viewing and found that the gender-related sports stereotypes do not always hold true:

> Women and men often experience sport on television in different ways. At the same time, we have been surprised to find out how similar the sports viewing experiences of men and women can be if their interest and fanship are at similar levels. (p. 234)

[40] New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay Area are the four U.S. cities home to multiple teams in the same sports league (e.g., Chicago is home to Major League Baseball's Cubs and White Sox). My analysis strategy will account for the presence of multiple teams in the same city.

Ware and Kowalski (2012) came to similar conclusions in their study of gender-related differences in BIRGing and CORFing, namely that sports fan behavior is based on allegiance to a team and not based on gender. In sum, there are more male fans than female fans, yet fans tend to act similarly regardless of gender.

Table 1. U.S. Sports Fan Demographics

	% Yes, a sports fan		% Yes, a sports fan
National adults	59	Annual household income < $30,000	54
		$30,000-$74,999	55
Men	66	> $75,000+	68
Women	51		
		Employed	65
White	58	Not employed	51
Nonwhite	62		
		Children under 18	62
18-29 years old	61	No children under 18	58
30-49 years old	62		
50-64 years old	55	Live in big/small city	62
65+ years old	57	Live in suburb of big/small city	60
		Live in town/rural area	54
East	56		
Midwest	57	Conservative	59
South	60	Moderate	60
West	61	Liberal	58
Postgraduate	63	Republican	64
College graduate only	59	Democrat	60
Some college	61	Independent	56
High school or less	56		

Note. Fan data taken from a 2015 Gallup survey (Jones, 2015).

Considering the fan-related differences that do exist between men and women, it is worth contemplating that some of the dependent variables under investigation in this dissertation may have different outcomes based on gender, particularly considering the greater number of men compared to women who self-identify as fans. For example,

more men than women may congregate as fans or engage in sports-related talk, leading to different storytelling-related opportunities for men and women. In addition, sports media outlets do a poor job of covering women (Bishop, 2003; Cooky, Messner, & Musto, 2015; Kane 1988), which could affect women's perceptions of belonging and connectedness to sports. Women in general are also less interested in sports than men (Deaner, Balish, & Lombardo, 2016) – due in part to societal expectations about traditional gender roles (Eccles & Harold, 1991; Gantz & Wenner, 1991; and Wiley, Shaw, & Havitz, 2000) – which may leave team-related stories not only less accessible, but also less attractive to women than men. With all of the forgoing in mind, I propose the following research question:

> RQ1: Are the relationships proposed in hypotheses 1 through 3 moderated by participants' gender?[41]

Hearing survey participants stories of sports and cities

The civic engagement outcomes discussed above – belonging, collective efficacy, civic participation, and ICSN – are measured using closed-ended survey questions. This is a purposeful and worthwhile strategy for examining the hypotheses and research questions introduced thus far, particularly in light of extant CIT research. But in forcing people to choose from a set of predetermined, researcher-selected answers, close-ended questions often fail to allow for nuance or capture emotion in participants'

[41] As H4 is based on aggregate data that cannot be analyzed by gender, I do not include H4.

responses (Singer & Couper, 2017). Open-ended questions, on the other hand, give voice to the participants and allow them to tell stories in their own words, leading researchers to a more sensitive comprehension of the topic under investigation (Schuman, 1966). In order to gain this deeper understanding of the potential storytelling impact of local major league sports teams on individuals and communities, I presented study participants with several original open-ended questions and performed a content analysis of responses. Doing so will give participants an opportunity to describe, in their own words, their connections to sports and sports' connections to their cities.

In an effort to detect any storytelling-related themes in these open-ended responses, I present the following research questions:

RQ2a: How do people describe what professional sports means to them?

RQ2b: If a city without a major league team were to gain a major league team, how do residents describe the impact on quality of life in their city?

RQ2c: If a city with at least one major league team were to lose all of its major league teams, how do residents describe the impact on quality of life in their city?

Conclusion

Some people think of major league sports as a distraction from weightier matters. Some think of them as a drain on community resources, and some, frankly, don't think of them much at all. Still others, like the Houston Mayor and the Buffalo resident quoted at the beginning of this chapter, think of major league sports as

something unique and almost magical: a powerful presence that ties people – family, friends, neighbors, strangers – to a place and to each other. This is a tall order; perhaps too tall for athletes on a field or a court or ice, playing games that children play. Can a team actually help people feel that they belong, that they can change their community for the better? Can a team provide a discursive glue that brings and holds residents together? Can a team really play a role in motivating people to civic action? Is such magic merely a myth, or is it, on the other hand, the tangible substance of stories told by and about major league sports teams? These are the questions answered in the pages ahead, where a team's value is quantified not in terms of ticket sales or touchdowns, but in its impact on how people feel about and behave in their community.

Chapter 3: Methodology

To test the relationships among sports teams, storytelling, and civic engagement, I used two distinct methods. First, I conducted an original survey of residents from every U.S. metropolitan area home to at least one major league baseball, basketball, football, or hockey team, as well as the closest (population-wise) comparably-sized metro areas with no teams in any of these four leagues. Surveys have been the traditional method employed in CIT studies to test relationships between storytelling and civic engagement, and in conducting these surveys, I follow this well-established trend. As an additional part of my survey, I included several open-ended questions, the responses to which were content analyzed to detect storytelling-related themes. Second, I analyzed 12 years of U.S. volunteerism and donation data from all major league sports markets. Both of these methods are described in detail in this chapter.

ORIGINAL SURVEY

Study locations and participants

The surveys were administered from August-October, 2017, using Amazon's Mechanical Turk, to residents of 56 U.S. metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs; see Table 2). Forty-three of these locations were chosen because they represent every MSA in the U.S. that is home to a Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), or National Hockey League (NHL) team. Forty-two of the 43 locations are top-50 MSAs population-wise in the United States, with the

exception being Green Bay, Wisconsin – home to the Packers football team – which ranks as the 157th most populous MSA.[42] Within these MSAs, there are 29 MLB teams, 29 NBA teams, 32 NFL teams, and 23 NHL teams,[43] for a total of 113 professional U.S.-based teams. The other 13 MSAs included in my study were chosen because they (a) represent the other top-50 population MSAs with no major league sports team in one of the aforementioned leagues (n = 8), or (b) have comparable population sizes to some of the smaller MSAs with teams (n = 5). The average non-team MSA is about half the population size (1,432,627) of the average MSA with a team (3,799,731). In the analyses reported in the next chapter, I employ statistical methods and use control variables that help take into account the differences in population sizes among the MSAs. As an additional test, I also replicate my analyses with a subset of more comparable MSAs based on population size (more details about the replication are provided in the next chapter). For more information on all 56 metro areas surveyed, please refer to Table 2.

Metropolitan statistical areas, as opposed to cities, were chosen for my analysis because it is a geographic boundary that represents a team's sphere of potential influence better than the city limits. MSAs are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as being:

[42] All MSA population numbers are based on 2016 U.S. Bureau of the Census estimates, which were the most up-to-date estimates available at the time of my survey's launch.

[43] Baseball and basketball each have one team based in Canada. Hockey has seven Canada-based teams, and football has no teams outside of the United States.

> associated with at least one urbanized area that has a population of at least 50,000. The metropolitan statistical area comprises the central county or counties or equivalent entities containing the core, plus adjacent outlying counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the central county or counties as measured through commuting.[44]

In other words, an MSA – of which there are 382 in the U.S. – consists of communities that are linked not only geographically, but also socially and economically. Hence, using MSAs for my analysis is an acknowledgement that a team's impact extends into the suburbs and surrounding areas.

[44] Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_cbsa.html#mesa

Table 2. Metropolitan Statistical Area Information

MSA order by population size	MSA Principal City/Cities	No. of Major League Teams	Population (2016)	Number of Survey Participants
9	Atlanta, GA	3	5789700	51
31	Austin, TX*	0	2056405	44
21	Baltimore, MD	2	2798886	46
49	Birmingham, AL*	0	1147417	45
10	Boston, MA	4	4794447	50
50	Buffalo, NY*	2	1132804	34
22	Charlotte, NC	2	2474314	45
3	Chicago, IL	5	9512999	44
28	Cincinnati, OH	2	2165139	27
32	Cleveland, OH*	3	2055612	40
33	Columbus, OH	1	2041520	28
4	Dallas/Fort Worth, TX	4	7233323	49
19	Denver, CO	4	2853077	50
14	Detroit, MI	4	4297617	47
158	Evansville, IN*	0	315948	9
52	Grand Rapids, MI*	0	1047099	28
157	Green Bay, WI*	1	318236	14
47	Hartford, CT*	0	1206836	42
5	Houston, TX	3	6772470	40
34	Indianapolis, IN	2	2004230	36
40	Jacksonville, FL*	1	1478212	35
30	Kansas City, MO	2	2104509	34
29	Las Vegas, NV	2	2155664	50
2	Los Angeles, CA	8	13310447	41
44	Louisville, KY*	0	1283430	39
42	Memphis, TN*	1	1342842	30
8	Miami, FL	4	6066387	35
39	Milwaukee, WI*	2	1572482	50
16	Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN	4	3551036	49
36	Nashville, TN*	2	1865298	28
46	New Orleans, LA*	2	1268883	26
1	New York, NY	9	20153634	63
41	Oklahoma City, OK*	1	1373211	43

Table 2 Continued

23	Orlando, FL	1	2441257	37
7	Philadelphia, PA	4	6070500	43
12	Phoenix, AZ*	4	4661537	47
26	Pittsburgh, PA	3	2342299	44
25	Portland, OR	1	2424955	50
38	Providence, RI*	0	1614750	19
43	Raleigh, NC*	1	1302946	42
45	Richmond, VA*	0	1281708	39
13	Riverside, CA*	0	4527837	35
51	Rochester, NY*	0	1078879	30
27	Sacramento, CA	1	2296418	41
48	Salt Lake City, UT*	1	1186187	50
24	San Antonio, TX	1	2429609	31
17	San Diego, CA	1	3317749	40
11	San Francisco/Oakland, CA	5	4679166	36
35	San Jose, CA	1	1978816	27
15	Seattle, WA	2	3798902	49
156	South Bend, IN*	0	320740	9
20	St. Louis, MO	2	2807002	32
18	Tampa/St. Petersburg, FL	3	3032171	35
53	Tucson, AZ*	0	1016206	18
37	Virginia Beach, VA*	0	1726907	31
6	Washington DC	4	6131977	42

Note. * denotes MSA was included in the subset used for replicated analyses using more comparably-sized (population-wise) MSAs.

Another reason for using MSAs deals with stadium locations as well as multiple teams of the same sport playing in the same area. The majority of major league teams play in the city after which they are named. In several cases, however, a sports team might bear a city's moniker – the *Dallas* Cowboys or the *Oakland* Athletics – but the geographic relationship may be more complex than it appears. For example, the

Cowboys play in a stadium in Arlington, Texas, a city situated directly between the larger cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. At least 10 other professional teams play home games outside the limits of their namesake cities. Another complication deals with a team's fan base. The Athletics, for example, play in Oakland, but a report using Facebook-supplied fan data shows that a majority of baseball fans living in Oakland are actually fans of the San Francisco Giants, not the Athletics (Giratikanon, Katz, Leonhardt, & Quealy, 2014).[45] This complicates matters when it comes to measuring how a franchise's success may affect its namesake city. For this and other reasons detailed below, metropolitan statistical areas, and not city limits, are the geographic delimiter of choice for my analyses. Using MSAs, for example, places San Francisco and Oakland within the same geographic boundary, and the same applies to Arlington, Dallas, and Fort Worth. By doing so, the dominance of San Francisco Giants fans in Oakland, and the Cowboys' impact on the adjacent cities of Dallas and Fort Worth, can now be taken into account.

I limit my consideration to those metro areas that have at least one team in the four most popular U.S. sports leagues: MLB, the NBA, the NFL, and the NHL.[46] An argument could be made that other sports and leagues, and even some college sports teams, attract just as much attention (mediated and in-person), if not more, than some

[45] This occurred in one other baseball market. Fans of the New York Yankees were more prevalent than fans of the Mets, even within the shadows of the Mets stadium.

[46] Major League Soccer (MLS) is growing in popularity, but has yet to eclipse any of these four. For more information, see http://www.theharrispoll.com/sports/Americas_Fav_Sport_2016.html; see also http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/theres-a-big-five-in-north-american-pro-sports/.

major league teams. Lexington's interest in Kentucky basketball or South Bend's attention to Notre Dame football would certainly rival, if not in a few cases eclipse, interest in major league teams in some cities. Indeed, in smaller communities, the local college, minor league, or even high school team may play a key storytelling role. I have chosen, however, to focus on major league teams for two main reasons. First, how people identify with a major league sports team may be different than how they identify with, say, a college team. The former may be seen as a representative of an entire city, whereas the latter may be seen as being more representative of a student body or alumni. I am looking to uncover organizations that promote a "we" among an entire community, not a sub-group of those who may have formal ties to a school. Instead of being an examination of different *types* of teams' storytelling capabilities, my dissertation remains focused on the larger idea at hand – the storytelling capabilities of a major league sports team, a unique city-wide organization. Furthermore, as already noted, major league sports teams are often the focus of city-wide referenda related to using public money for stadium construction or renovation (e.g., Owen, 2006). This is not usually the case for colleges, since their funding generally comes from a state or private source instead of local public monies. For these reasons, my study focuses on MSAs that are home to at least one team from the four most popular major league sports in the United States.

Participants for my survey were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk or, simply, MTurk. MTurk is an online crowdsourcing service that enables "requestors" to

post jobs (called Human Intelligence Tasks, or HITs) that MTurk workers can complete for nominal monetary rewards. Among other things, MTurk is a popular source of participants for social science research. Studies comparing results using different sampling methodologies have shown that MTurk samples are comparable to commonly used undergraduate samples, as well as online and other non-online sampling methods (see Huff & Tingley, 2015). In fact, Buhrmester, Kwang, and Gosling (2011) have demonstrated that MTurk samples are more diverse than U.S. college undergraduate and some other online samples.

MTurk allows HIT creators to recruit workers based on the U.S. state in which they reside, and I used this residency feature to narrow down my sample of participants. To help further confine my participant pool to those residing in one of the 56 metro areas, I made clear in my HIT instructions, as well as at the beginning of the survey (see Appendix A for the full questionnaire), that the survey was limited to those residing in the MSAs under investigation, and those who did not live in the particular metro area would not be paid for completing the survey. While it was not possible to guarantee the location of each MTurk worker below the state level, to further induce honesty about their location, I asked respondents to share their current residential zip code. Also, MTurk allows requestors to see the unique MTurk worker identification number for each person who completed my survey. For my purposes, having access to this number made it possible to identify MTurk workers who, against the instructions, took a survey multiple times.

A total of 3,275 participants started a survey, but this is not the final count used in my analysis. Some MTurk workers were not qualified because they were under age 18 or did not live in the metropolitan area specified in the survey (n=578). For unknown reasons, some respondents did not finish the survey and did not complete enough of the survey items to make their data useable for my analyses (n=295). Several respondents left non-sensical responses to open-ended questions, such as a random jumble of letters, and these were discarded from analysis (n=11). Finally, in spite of clear instructions that were posted prior to opening, and at the beginning of, the survey, some MTurk workers completed the survey multiple times for different metropolitan areas (e.g., an MTurk worker in California completed the Sacramento survey, the San Diego survey, and the Riverside survey; n=272); these, too, were removed from analysis.

The final sample used for data analysis consisted of 2,119 participants. The target for my data collection was 50 respondents from each MSA. This was achieved, and in a few cases exceeded, in most MSAs. Following data cleaning, however, the final number of useable respondents was generally lower than 50. On average, there were 37.84 (*S.D.* = 10.98) respondents per the geographic targets of this analysis, with a range from 63 (New York) to 9 (South Bend and Evansville).[47] For a demographic profile of participants used in my analysis, please see Table 3.

[47] A note on New York, South Bend, and Evansville: New York was a unique situation, in that it was the only metropolitan statistical area in my sample that encompassed parts of two different states, New York and New Jersey. Because of this, the New York MSA survey was fielded in MTurk twice, simultaneously to MTurk workers in New York and New Jersey. This resulted in more than 50 useable respondents in the

Table 3. Survey Participant Demographics (n = 2,119)

Gender	
Male	41.3%
Female	58.7
Race	
White	72.0
Non-White	28.0
Age	
18-29	35.9
30-49	51.2
50-64	10.9
65+	2.1
Education	
High school or less	7.7
Some college	36.2
College+	56.1
Income	
less than $30k	20.0
$30-49999K	25.8
$50-74999k	25.1
$75K+	29.1
Current homeowner	41.6
Lived in current neighborhood	
1-5 years	50.1
6-10 years	19.5
11-15 years	9.7
16+ years	20.6
Number of people in the household	
1	15.7
2 or 3	53.2
4+	31.1
Political ideology	
Conservative	24.8
Liberal	43.1
Moderate	32.1

New York MSA. Turning to South Bend and Evansville, these two "small" MSAs were both included in the sample in order to get a sample size more comparable to that of Green Bay.

Procedure

Participants, after agreeing to take the survey using an online consent form, were asked several questions aimed at screening out those who were under 18 years of age, as well as those who were not residents of one of the 56 MSAs under consideration (please see Appendix A for the full questionnaire). Those who passed the screening were asked questions to gauge their sense of belonging, perceptions of collective efficacy, and civic participation, as well as questions used to measure their integration into the storytelling network. Furthermore, participants were presented with questions that assessed their general and local fan strength. Surveys were identical, except for slight variations that made each survey relevant to the metro area under investigation. For example, the survey in Boston referenced Boston-area sports teams, the survey in Seattle referenced Seattle-area teams, and the survey in Tucson, which has no MLB, NBA, NFL, or NHL teams, did not have questions pertaining to local professional sports fandom. Participants were paid $0.50 for completing the survey, and the survey typically took 10-12 minutes to complete.

To control for effects related to the order in which questions are presented to respondents, some sets of questions were displayed in random order. Order effects, as they are called, have been well documented (Krosnick & Alwin, 1987), but the psychological mechanism behind them is not clear. Several means have been postulated, with one likely explanation being priming (Auspurg & Jäckle, 2015). Priming

is the idea that people's minds are filled with information consumed from their surroundings creating a reservoir from which they draw the most readily accessible information when they make decisions (Collins & Loftus, 1975). In a survey setting, this means that answers to questions are influenced by the information encountered in previous questions. To control for this possibility, participants were randomly assigned to either see the sports questions first, or the civic engagement and storytelling network questions first. I controlled for this order of appearance in my analyses, and in only one instance were question order effects observed, which will be noted in the next chapter.

Measures

Civic engagement

Sense of belonging. To measure a resident's sense of belonging, I used an eight-item "belonging index" developed by Ball-Rokeach et al. (2001, see p. 406). The index has four objective and four subjective measures. The objective items are as follows:

> How many of your neighbors do you know well enough to (respondent specifies a number from 0-10):
>
> 1. Keep watch on your house or apartment?
> 2. Ask for a ride?
> 3. Talk with them about a personal problem?
> 4. Ask for their assistance in making a repair?

A five-point Likert-type scale was used for the subjective items as follows:

How much do you agree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree; reverse coded in my analysis):

5. I am interested in knowing what my neighbors are like.
6. I enjoy meeting and talking with my neighbors.
7. It's easy to become friends with my neighbors.
8. My neighbors always borrow things from me and my family.

To bring the objective and subjective measures on the same five-point scale, answers to objective measures were divided by two before analyses were run (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001). Reliability analysis was run (α = 0.88) and the items were combined into the *sense of belonging* variable (*M* = 17.05, *S.D.* = 7.05). This eight-item measure, which has achieved reliability in multiple studies, is the one used most frequently to measure belonging in CIT studies (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; Wilkin et al., 2009). It is, however, not the only method for measuring belonging. Kang (2013) used only the four subjective measures to measure belonging amongst an elderly Korean community, while Kim and colleagues (Kim et al, 2015; Kim & Shin, 2015) have used several different scales based on place attachment and social capital, respectively, to measure belonging. Given its widespread use in the literature, however, I employ the eight-item measure detailed here.

Collective efficacy. Sampson et al. (1997) suggested that collective efficacy can be measured by gauging neighbors' social cohesion along with their willingness to help one another solve local problems. They used a two-dimensional scale, the first

dimension measuring social cohesion, and the second measuring what they termed "informal social control" (i.e., "informal mechanisms by which residents themselves achieve public order," p. 918). CIT studies have used all or part of this two-dimensional measure to gauge collective efficacy. Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a, 2006b), as well as Matsaganis and Wilkin (2015), used only the informal social control questions, since this dimension, they state, is more in line with how neighbors engage with one another. Kang (2013) also used only the informal social control scale, albeit in truncated fashion. Kim and colleagues (Kim et al., 2015; Kim & Shin, 2015), however, utilized both collective efficacy dimensions, and I followed the lead of these more recent studies and gathered data on both dimensions. Social cohesion is measured using the following five-point, five-item Likert-type scale:

> How much do you agree with the statements below? (1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree; reverse coded in my analysis)
>
> 1. People in my neighborhood are willing to help each other.
> 2. This is a close-knit neighborhood.
> 3. I generally trust people in my neighborhood.
> 4. People in my neighborhood generally get along with each other.
> 5. People in my neighborhood share the same values.

Informal social control is also measured using five items, thusly:

How many of your neighbors do you think will participate in solving each of the problems below, assuming that (1 = *no one will participate* to 5 = *everyone will participate*)

1. There is a safety issue walking at night in your neighborhood area.
2. Stores harmful to children are about to open in your town.
3. Factories emanating hazardous chemicals are about to be built in your town.
4. More traffic lights are needed to solve severe traffic issues, and your neighbors are recruiting people to prepare a petition.
5. Volunteers are needed to participate in community revitalization projects organized by your neighbors.

Keeping in line with Sampson et al. (1997, see p. 920), responses on both dimensions were combined following reliability analysis (α = 0.85) into a single measure of collective efficacy (M = 32.75, *S.D.* = 7.07).

Civic participation. Two indices were used to gauge civic participation. First, following Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a), I asked participants if they had been involved in any of the following five civic actions within the previous 12 months: (a) attended a city council meeting, public hearing, or legislative meeting; (b) written a letter to the editor of a news organization; (c) contacted an elected official; (d) circulated a petition; or (e) taken part in a political demonstration or protest. Responses were recorded as a "yes" or "no." What I term the *traditional CIT civic participation* measure was then be created by summing responses for each respondent (M = .90, *S.D.* = 1.24).

Zukin et al.'s (2006) work cautions that what constitutes civic participation has broadened in scope beyond traditional electoral-related activities. For this reason, I included an additional measure of civic engagement, modified from a measure constructed by Zukin et al. (2006). Their measure consisted of 19 items, and I selected a subset – six out of their 19 – for inclusion in my study. The six were chosen because they represented civic activities outside the scope of Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a), whereas the majority of the remaining 13 items were more in line with, and several were nearly identical to, Kim and Ball-Rokeach. Again, respondents were given yes/no options when asked if they had participated in the following activities within the last 12 months: (a) worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in your community; (b) participated in any community service or volunteer activity (not including for a political candidate or campaign) as a way to help others; (c) personally walked, ran, or bicycled for a local charitable cause; (d) raised money for a local charitable cause; (e) contributed money to a local candidate, the local political party, or any local organization that supported candidates; and (f) volunteered for a local political organization or candidate running for local office. Responses were summed to create the *non-traditional civic participation* measure (M = 1.67, $S.D.$ = 1.63). Statistical analyses were conducted using both of my civic engagement measures separately, as

well as with both measures merged into a combined variable named, *civic participation* (*M* = 2.57, *S.D.* = 2.56).[48]

Integrated connectedness to a storytelling network

As discussed in the literature review, the strength of a person's storytelling network does not come from individual connections to storytellers, but via a combined, network effect formed as people connect with multiple storytellers. To demonstrate this networked strength, Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a; see also Kim, 2003) outlined an equation that takes into consideration the interactions among interpersonal, media, and organizational storytellers, a measurement they termed an integrated connectedness to a storytelling network (ICSN). The equation is as follows:

$$\mathrm{ICSN} = \sqrt{\mathrm{INS} \times \mathrm{LC}} + \sqrt{\mathrm{OC} \times \mathrm{INS}} + \sqrt{\mathrm{LC} \times \mathrm{OC}}$$

where INS is intensity of interpersonal neighborhood storytelling, LC is local media connectedness, and OC is scope of connection to community organizations. This equation functions such that ICSN is higher for those who have higher scores on all three variables, and not just on one variable.

Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006b, p. 435) have acknowledged that the ICSN equation could be strengthened. For example, the equation allows for the consideration of the

[48] Prior to combining both variables, principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted using all of the civic participation (traditional and non-traditional) measures. Results indicated that two factors were indeed present, namely one consisting of political activities (explaining 32.98% of variance) and another consisting of generally apolitical activities (explaining 10.97% of variance). The two variables are positively correlated ($r = 0.58$, $n = 2{,}087$, $p < .001$).

scope, or range, of community organizations with which residents are involved, but it does not factor in the intensity of their involvement. The ICSN equation remains, however, a viable and oft-used means of measuring the strength of a storytelling network (e.g., Jung et al., 2013; Kim & Kang, 2010; Kim et al., 2011; Kim & Shin, 2015; Nah & Yamamoto, 2017; Wilken et al., 2009). It should also be noted that while INS, LC, and OC have not been constructed identically in all CIT studies (e.g., Kang, 2013; Kim & Shin, 2015), the variables always have a similar composition to those in the Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a) study. Unless otherwise noted, I used the three measures as they were originally constructed in Kim and Ball-Rokeach (2006a).

Intensity of interpersonal neighborhood storytelling (INS). To measure intensity of respondents' storytelling connections to others, the following question was asked: "how often do you talk with your neighbors about anything related to your neighborhood?" Responses were recorded on a 1-10 scale, where 1 = never and 10 = all the time (M = 4.61, *S.D.* = 2.54).

Local media connectedness (LC). The original CIT study measured local media exposure by presenting respondents with four items related to television news and newspaper exposure. With the proliferation of media channels in the years since that first published study, I borrowed from a more recent measure (Kim et al., 2015) to assess local media connectedness. My measure presented respondents with a list of 13 generic news outlets (e.g., "national newspapers," "local television news," etc.) and

asked, “how often do you use this service to get local news and information?” The news outlets were:

1. National television news (broadcast, cable, or online)
2. National newspapers (print or online)
3. National news radio (broadcast or online)
4. National news magazines (print or online)
5. Local television news (broadcast or online)
6. Local newspapers (print or online)
7. Local news radio (broadcast or online)
8. Neighborhood television news (broadcast or online)
9. Neighborhood newspapers (print or online)
10. Community organization newsletters
11. Neighborhood websites
12. Social media among neighborhood people
13. Neighborhood email newsletters or listservs

Responses were collected using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1=never and 7=always. Following reliability analysis (α = 0.87), individual responses were summed to create the *local media connectedness* measure (M = 43.34, *S.D.* = 14.50).

Scope of connection to community organizations (OC). To calculate the scope of organizational connections, respondents were asked if they belong to any of the six following organization types: (a) sport or recreational; (b) cultural or ethnic; (c) religious;

(d) neighborhood or homeowner's; (e) political or educational; and (f) other. Responses for each of the six items was recorded as a yes or no, where yes = 1 and no = 0. After data collection, scores were summed to create the *scope of connection to community organizations* measure (*M* = 1.24, *S.D.* = 1.26).

Integrated connectedness to a storytelling network (ICSN). This measure was created by inserting the appropriate variables into the ICSN equation above (*M* = 21.40, *S.D.* = 10.66).

Sports measures

General fan strength. All respondents, regardless of whether or not they lived in a sports MSA, were asked how much they agreed/disagreed with the following statement: "I consider myself to be a sports fan." Response options were on a seven-point scale from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (7). Following data collection, responses were reverse coded so that higher scores indicated greater sports fandom (*M* = 4.62, *SD* = 2.09). The purpose of asking this question was two-fold. First, this question provided a simple measure of sports fandom that could be asked of all survey participants, and second, it acted as a screener question; residents of MSAs with teams who responded "strongly disagree" were not asked questions related to their fan relationship with local major league teams.[49]

[49] Those residing in MSAs with teams who responded "strongly disagree" on the *general fan strength* question (n = 216) were given a score of "0" on *local fan strength*. This was done so as to include these 216 participants in the statistical analyses.

Local fan strength. Being a fan of sports in general is not synonymous with being a fan of a local major league team, and so a key to testing my hypotheses was to gauge residents' local fan strength. Social scientists have created a variety of measures in an attempt to assess a person's relationship with sports and sports teams (Dwyer, Greenhalgh, & LeCrom, 2015; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Heere & Dickson, 2008; Mahoney, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000; Wann, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Although no consensus exists on whether one measure is superior to others, it has been shown that several of the most oft-used measures are positively correlated with one another (Wann & Pierce, 2003), suggesting that there are a number of viable means of obtaining a measure of local fan strength. With this in mind, I used Wann's (2002) sports fandom questionnaire (SFQ) – a reliable, valid, and succinct measure – to assess participants' local fan strength. The SFQ consists of five items with seven-point Likert response options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.[50] The items were slightly modified to focus on respondents' connections to a local favorite team instead of sports in general. Survey participants were given a list of all the major league teams in their metro area and asked to choose a favorite team from among the choices (participants

[50] The original SFQ is presented as an eight-point scale, but I have changed it to a seven-point scale to keep the measure more in line with other Likert scales being used throughout my survey.

were given an option to choose "none of the above"[51]), and those who selected one of the local teams were asked to respond to the following five items:

1. I consider myself to be a sports fan.
2. My friends see me as a [favorite team] fan.
3. I believe that following the [favorite team] is the most enjoyable form of entertainment.
4. My life would be less enjoyable if I were not allowed to follow the [favorite team].
5. Being a [favorite team] fan is very important to me.

I also added an additional item, adapted from Wann and Branscombe's (1993) sports spectator identification scale, to the above measure as a way of including a behavioral component to the SFQ. The item is: "I like to display the [favorite team] name or logo on my clothes, my car, in my home, or where I work." Once reliability analysis was completed (α = 0.94), responses to these six items were summed and divided by six (to place this measure on the same scale as the *general fan strength* measure) to create the *local fan strength* measure (M = 3.75, *S.D.* = 1.82). *General fan strength* and *local fan strength* are positively correlated (r = 0.74, n = 1,767, p < .001).

[51] Participants who selected "none of the above" (n = 177) were given a score of "1" on the final *local fan strength* measure, making them equal to those who selected "strongly disagree" to all the SQF items. This was done so as to include these 177 participants in the statistical analyses.

Sports record. This is the first of two variables used in the survey analysis to assess the success of the professional sports franchise(s) within a particular MSA (Miller, 2013). For MSAs with only one sports franchise, *sports record* is simply the team's winning percentage (number of games won divided by total number of games played) in the season completed prior to data collection.[52] For MSAs with multiple teams, *sports record* is an average of the teams' winning percentages in the season completed prior to data collection. In all cases, this results in a *sports record* measure with scores ranging from 0 to 1. Data on team wins/losses, as well as playoff appearances, for all four major leagues, were gathered from sites operated by www.sports-reference.com, an online clearinghouse for team, player, and league information.[53]

Playoffs. Beyond a team's regular season record, appearances in postseason play are another indicator of team accomplishments. Hence, my second measure of franchise success is the percentage of teams in each MSA that appeared in the playoffs in the season completed prior to data collection (Miller, 2013). For MSAs with one sports team, *playoffs* results in a binary measure of whether a team made the playoffs (1) or did not make the playoffs (0). For MSAs with multiple teams, *playoffs* is calculated by dividing the number of MSA teams that made the playoffs by the total number of

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[52] The sports seasons that were completed prior to survey administration (August-October 2017) were as follows: 2016 MLB; 2016-17 NBA; 2016-17 NFL; 2016-17 NHL). These seasons were used to calculate both measures of franchise success, *sports record* and *playoffs*.

[53] The four applicable sites are: baseball-reference.com, basketball-reference.com, pro-football-reference.com, and hockey-reference.com.

teams in the MSA. This produces a final *playoffs* measure with scores between 0 and 1 for all metro areas with major league teams.

Control variables

Respondents were asked additional questions in order to collect information that was used to create control variables for the statistical analysis. These variables are: *age*, *income*, *education*, *gender*, *ethnicity*, *residential tenure*, *homeownership*, *family size,* and *political ideology*. In addition, survey question order was also included as a control variable. MSA-level control variables were also used in my analysis, including: *population size*, *median income*, *unemployment rate*, the percentage of households within each MSA with children under 18 (i.e., *families with children under 18*), and the percentage of the population within each MSA that identifies as white (i.e., *white households*). The MSA-level control variables were created using information provided by the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Factfinder website. They were included in the analysis to help account for differences across the various metro areas under investigation.

Analysis

In spite of the variety of control variables – including those at the MSA level – used in my study, it is likely that each MSA has unique influences on residents. It was, therefore, appropriate to analyze the data using a statistical technique that takes this distinctiveness into account. As Hoffman (1997) noted, "[hierarchical linear models] explicitly recognize that individuals within a particular group may be more similar to one

another than individuals in other groups" (p. 726), and it is with this recognition in mind that data was clustered by MSA and hierarchical linear modeling, or HLM, was used to analyze my survey data.

Content analysis

After completing the statistical analysis of my survey's closed-ended data, I turned to an analysis of the open-ended responses. This involved a thorough reading of all open-ended responses to detect themes in the responses, followed by a content analysis to quantify the presence of these themes. Finally, exemplars of each theme were selected for inclusion in the open-ended results presented in Chapter 5.

Data collection and assessment. Participants were presented with two open-ended questions. During the block of survey questions that measured interest in sports and local teams, participants were asked, "what do professional sports mean to you?"[54] This question, which is connected to RQ2a, was posed to all survey respondents, with the exception of those who responded "strongly disagree" to the *general fan strength* measure (n = 247).[55] The omission was purposeful, as I did not want to antagonize those who had already indicated a strong dislike for sports by asking further sports-related questions. In hindsight, however, their comments about what professional sports meant

[54] I was reminded of the distinction between *professional* sports (which can include minor league professional teams) and *major league* sports (which does not include minor leagues) after data collection had ended, hence the wording here reflects the idea of *professional* sports. I do not believe the wording difference had an appreciable effect on responses, as many comments referred directly to the major league teams in the participants' cities.

[55] This was the first question in the block of sports questions. As a reminder, the question wording was: "I consider myself to be a sports fan."

to them would have been valuable, and if I had a chance to do it over again, I would have posed the question to them.[56] Of the 1,845 participants who saw this question, 1,524 (82.6%) left a response.

All participants, including those who answered "strongly disagree" to being a sports fan, saw one additional question, but this question differed slightly depending on whether or not the participant lived in a city with or without a major league sports team. Participants living in a city with a major league team were asked how the quality of life in their metro area would change if a major league team moved to their metro area. Those living in a city with a major league team were asked how the quality of life in their metro area would change if all of the major league teams left their metro area. A more detailed discussion of these questions follows.

For those living in a non-sports metro area, the following closed-ended question was asked: "If a professional team from Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, or the National Hockey League moved to [name of their metro area], the quality of life in the [name of the metro area] metro area would...," with response options ranging from "fall a great deal" (1) to "improve a great deal" (5). They were then asked to explain their response in a follow-up, open-ended question worded thusly: "In a few words, can you tell us why you think the

[56] That said, I am fairly certain after coding all of the open-ended responses that many of the 247 respondents not asked this question would have responded with themes similar to others who expressed a disinterest in sports.

quality of life in [name of metro area] would [response to previous question, e.g., fall a great deal] if a professional sports team moved to [name of metro area]?" This open-ended question is related to RQ2b, and all participants in the 13 non-sports metro areas were asked this question (n = 388), with 97.9% (n = 380) leaving responses.

Participants living in metro areas with teams were presented with nearly identical closed- and open-ended questions, except that in asking how quality of life would be affected by a team's arrival, they were asked about quality of life "if all of the professional sports teams left [metro area name]." Connected to RQ2c, this open-ended question was posed to all participants living in metro areas with major league teams (n = 1,731), and 98.2% (n = 1,699) left responses.

Coding schema. Following data collection, I read all of the responses for each of the three questions in turn. I used a grounded theory approach (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) to review the data and inductively determine categories that emerged. Through extensive note taking and constant review of emerging categories, I identified multiple themes in the responses to each question (see Table 4): three themes emerged related to RQ2a (the meta-theme *entertainment/outlet*, with sub-themes of *entertainment* and *outlet*; the meta-theme *connectedness*, with sub-themes of *community*, *family*, *friends*, and *conversation*; and *definition*); six themes related to RQ2b (*money*, *connectedness*, *traffic*, *crime*, *not my city*, and *not a fan*); and eight themes for RQ2c (*identity*, *money*, *connectedness*, *entertainment*, *not a fan*, *not sports*, *crime*, and *traffic*). Following detection of the themes, I created a codebook (see Appendix B for the full codebook),

and along with a second coder, proceeded to code a random sample of 20% of all responses. With few exceptions, themes were coded as either being present (1) or not present (0) in a response. Acceptable intercoder reliability was achieved for each code using Krippendorff's alpha (see Table 4), and the remainder of the comments were then coded. Because the coded themes are best explicated through example responses, detailed explanations of each theme will be included alongside the presentation of the open-ended results in Chapter 5.

Table 4. Themes and intercoder reliability for open-ended responses

Question	Themes	Alpha
What do sports mean to you? (RQ2a)	Entertainment/Outlet	
	Entertainment	0.91
	Outlet	0.86
	Connectedness	
	Community	0.81
	Family	0.94
	Friends	0.91
	Conversation	0.78
	Definition	0.80
Why would quality of life in your metro area change if you *gained* a team? (RQ2b)	Money	0.95
	Connectedness	0.83
	Traffic	0.88
	Crime	1.00
	Not my city	0.81
	Not a fan	0.82
Why would quality of life in your metro area change if you *lost* all teams? (RQ2c)	Identity	0.72
	Money	0.95
	Connectedness	0.79
	Entertainment	0.83
	Not a fan	0.89
	Not sports	0.77
	Crime	0.91
	Traffic	1.00

VOLUNTEERING AND DONATION DATA

My second method for testing the relationship between sports teams and civic engagement involves an examination of volunteerism and donation data. Such an examination helps to overcome some of the pitfalls of my cross-sectional survey, namely its limited scope of time and the potential for social desirability bias – the penchant for survey takers to give answers that would make them look good in the eyes of others – to cloud the results. The volunteer data come from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, and the donation data come from tax documents filed by local chapters of the United Way in major league sports MSAs. Using these data, I was able to create variables that allowed me to test associations between a sports team's success and residents' volunteerism and charitable giving. For reasons that will be explained below, 2004-2015 is the date range investigated using these data.

Data sources

Current Population Survey. The Current Population Survey is my source for volunteerism data. For more than 50 years, the United States Bureau of the Census has conducted monthly surveys for the Bureau of Labor Statistics with the primary purpose of collecting employment-related information. Known as the Current Population Survey, these monthly surveys also ask questions related to topics other than employment. Since 2002, the September survey has asked supplemental questions related to volunteerism, and this survey is known as the Current Population Survey, September

Volunteer Supplement (for simplicity, I will hereafter refer to this supplemental survey as, simply, the CPS).

To select households to interview, the Census Bureau divided the country into approximately two thousand primary sampling units (PSUs) based on geography, demographics, and population size. Metropolitan areas and counties form the basis for PSU construction, and a sample of PSUs are chosen for inclusion in the survey.[57] The most populous PSUs are automatically included in the sample. A stratified sample of households within each chosen PSU is then selected for interviews. Interviews are primarily conducted in person, but a small percentage of interviews (e.g., roughly 10% in the 2015 CPS) are conducted by telephone. Current Population Survey data and documentation are made publicly available by the National Bureau of Economic Research.[58] The final sample for the CPS is 56,000 U.S. households, with data collected from individuals age 16 and older.

In 2003, several key changes were made to the Current Population Survey, which affected questions, populations controls, and weighting procedures.[59] Because the CPS sample in any given year includes households from the previous year's sample,[60] I have

[57] More details related to CPS sampling procedures can be found in the *Earnings and Employment* technical documentation, pages 191-198, which can be retrieved here: https://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech_methods.pdf.

[58] CPS data and documentation can be retrieved here: http://www.nber.org/data/current-population-survey-data.html.

[59] For more information on the 2003 CPS revisions, please see: https://www.bls.gov/cps/rvcps03.pdf.

[60] Once a household is selected for inclusion in a Current Population Survey, it will be contacted for four consecutive months, then not contacted for eight months, and then contacted again for four consecutive

chosen to analyze CPS data starting in 2004 in order to avoid the confusion of having data that contain respondents from before *and* after the 2003 changes.[61] In all, my CPS data sample includes all years between 2004 and 2015, with 2015 being the most recent year with publicly available data. Details about CPS questions relevant to my study will be discussed below.

United Way. Data collected from the CPS is limited by the self-reported nature of the responses. Social desirability bias, or the tendency for people to respond to survey questions in ways that help them appear more favorable to others, is of particular concern when asking people about community-minded activities like volunteerism (e.g., Kim & Kim, 2016). While surveys conducted face-to-face (which account for roughly 90% of the CPS surveys) help lessen the impact of social desirability bias (Holbrook, Green, & Krosnick, 2003),[62] they do not eliminate it. For this reason, I use another data source as a more tangible assessment of civic participation, namely charitable donations as reported on local United Way tax documents. Volunteerism and charitable giving are

months before being dropped from the sample. This means that one half of the sample in any given year was part of the previous year's sample as well.

[61] This decision was made in consultation with researchers at the United States Corporation for National and Community Service (USCNCS), which has also published data on volunteerism within metropolitan statistical areas, from 2004-2015. For more information, see https://www.nationalservice.gov/vcla/cities.

[62] That face-to-face interviews would lessen socially-desirable responses compared to telephone interviews may seem counterintuitive. As a possible explanation for this finding, Holbrook et al. (2003) stated that "the rapport probably developed during the lengthy face-to-face interviews may have inspired respondents to work harder at providing high-quality data, even when doing so meant admitting something that may not have been socially admirable" (p. 110).

positively related to one another (Wang & Graddy, 2008), and the since the latter is not a self-report, it is not susceptible to social desirability bias.

The United Way is a worldwide non-profit organization with local, autonomous branches in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. A local United Way chapter typically has donation-gathering/dispersing responsibilities that cover an entire city, county, or, in sparser populated areas, multiple counties. Money raised by a local United Way stays within that locale and is used to support efforts primarily aimed at improving education, income, and health within the local community.

As 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organizations, all local United Ways are required to make their tax returns available to the public. Among other things, this return – filed as an Internal Revenue Service Form 990 – lists the donations received during a 12-month period. I used these publicly-available IRS Form 990s, filed for the fiscal year ending on June 30, to gather donation data from 2004-2015 (2015 frequently being the most recent year with accessible tax documents) from all United Ways in locales that have major league teams.[63] Not all United Ways file their taxes for the same 12-month period, but a majority (n = 32) file for the fiscal year ending on June 30,[64] and information from these 32 United Ways will be used to analyze donation data. It was

[63] With few exceptions, the investigative journalism site *ProPublica* has collected, and made available for free download, IRS Form 990s for all local United Ways of interest.

[64] Twenty-five of the 42 United Ways in major league MSAs filed their taxes for the fiscal year during 2004-2015, and an additional 10 United Ways filed for the fiscal year during some of the years between 2004-2015. The remaining seven United Ways filed on the calendar year or following another schedule (e.g., May 1-April 30).

necessary to select for analysis United Ways that file for the same time period so that this time period would correspond with the team success variables.[65]

The United Way was chosen over other charitable organizations for four reasons. First, donations collected by local United Way chapters are used within the local community, whereas other charities, like the Red Cross, solicit donations that are typically used to fund projects in far-flung areas of the country or world. People wishing to strengthen their local community through charitable giving are more likely to donate to an organization, like the United Way, that emphasizes local projects. Second, the United Way focuses on monetary donations, while other organizations focus on donations of labor (e.g., Habitat for Humanity) or goods (e.g., Goodwill Industries). Estimating volunteer hours or the value of donated goods seems, from a face validity standpoint, prone to more error than does tracking and reporting monetary donations. Third, the United Way solicits donations throughout the year, whereas other organizations, such as the Salvation Army, focus their collection efforts on particular times of year. As professional sports occur throughout the year, it seems more relevant to the study at hand to use a charitable organization that is active 12 months out of the year. Fourth, the non-denominational nature of the United Way – as opposed to religious and religious-affiliated organizations – means that donated monies are

[65] For example, the fiscal year data range of July 1-June 30 corresponds to a different completed MLB season than does the calendar year date range of January 1-December 31. Using donation data with varying date ranges would not be compatible with the team success and some MSA-level control variables.

reported on publicly-available tax documents, making the donation amounts accessible for research such as mine. This is not the case for religious organizations, which are not required to disclose donations or other financial information.

Geographic boundary selection

As discussed earlier in the chapter, metropolitan statistical areas were chosen as this study's geographic delimiter because they represent a community's shared geographic, economic, and social boundary. In addition, MSAs were chosen for analysis because metro areas, and not cities, are the geographic designation compatible with, and reported in, CPS data files. Furthermore, a number of United Way chapters have responsibilities over a county or multiple counties, meaning that the geographic scope of their donation collecting, while not a perfect overlap with MSAs, is more in line geographically with MSAs than with city limits.

With all this in mind, my sample of locations for volunteer data are all 42 MSAs home to major league teams between 2004-2015,[66] and my sample for donation data is the subset of 30 major league MSAs with United Ways that filed taxes on a fiscal-year cycle between 2004-2015. It should be noted that five MSAs experienced a franchise exiting or entering during the 12 years under investigation: Atlanta, Charlotte,

[66] Las Vegas gained its first major league team, the NHL Las Vegas Golden Knights, in 2017. For this reason, my survey data includes 43 major league MSAs, while the volunteer data, which covers the years 2004-2015, only has 42 major league MSAs.

Oklahoma City, Seattle, and Washington, DC.[67] In addition, New Orleans' two professional sports franchises did not play games in New Orleans for a season (football) or more (basketball) due to Hurricane Katrina. Data from these MSAs will only be used for years in which the sports franchise existed and played in the namesake MSA.

Measures

Three datasets were used – sports data, Census data, and United Way data – to assemble the measures necessary to complete the analyses. The sports data were used to create three measures of franchise success, called *sports record*, *playoffs*, and *championship.* In choosing to create multiple team success variables, I not only follow established practice (Miller, 2013), but I also account for the fact that there is more than one way that people can perceive a team as successful. For example, some may consider a season with a winning record to be a triumph, but others might believe that anything short of a championship victory is a failure. CPS data were used to create a single measure of volunteerism, called *volunteer rate*. Finally, data taken from United Way chapters was used to create a measure called *donations*. All of these measures are explained in detail below.

Sports team variables. The variables *sports record* and *playoff percent* are calculated as described above in the original survey section of this chapter. One

[67] Two professional football franchises have relocated since 2016 (St. Louis and San Diego both relocated to Los Angeles), but this will not be a factor in my analyses since the CPS has not yet made the 2016 data available.

additional sports-related variable, *championship*, is used in my analyses of volunteer and donation data. This dichotomous variable indicates whether or not, during the sports season completed prior to data collection, a given MSA had a major league team that won a championship.

Volunteer rate. The CPS asks survey participants the following question: "Since September 1st of last year, have you done any volunteer activities through or for an organization?" There are four response options: "yes," "no," "don't know," or refused to answer. Those who answered "no" or "don't know" are given this follow-up question: "Sometimes people don't think of activities they do infrequently or activities they do for children's schools or youth organizations as volunteer activities. Since September 1st of last year, have you done any of these types of volunteer activities?" Response options are the same as those in the first question. In keeping with other studies that have used the CPS to explore volunteerism (Raposa, Dietz, & Rhodes, 2017; Shandra, 2017; see also Rotolo & Wilson, 2014), I define a volunteer as anyone who responded "yes" to either the first or second question. Non-volunteers are those who responded "no" or "don't know" to the second question, and those who refused to answer are not included in the analysis.

For each MSA, *volunteer rate* – or the percentage of people living in a particular MSA who volunteer – was calculated by dividing the total number of volunteers in an MSA in a given year, by the total number of people surveyed in the MSA in a given

year.[68] CPS respondents are assigned weights by the Census Bureau based on their representativeness to the population as a whole,[69] and I applied proper CPS weights to the sample before calculating *volunteer rate*.[70] The average *volunteer rate* for all MSAs across the years is 27.75% (*S.D.* = 5.76), with a range from 11.90% (Miami, 2013) to 45.49% (Green Bay, 2015).

Donations. Information on United Way donations was taken from IRS 990 forms. A change in IRS Form 990 reporting procedures in 2009 required organizations to disclose donation sources in greater detail. In order to keep the donation sources as comparable as possible, *donations* was calculated differently before and after the 2009 change (in my statistical analyses, I control for this break in the data), as follows. For forms filed between 2004 and 2008, *donations* was calculated by adding lines 1b ("Direct public support") and 1c ("Indirect public support") from Form 990 Part I. As the name suggests, direct public support refers to "contributions, gifts, grants, and bequests received directly from the public [and] includes amounts received from individuals, trusts, corporations, estates, foundations, public charities, or raised by an outside professional fundraiser" (GuideStar, para. 8). Indirect public support refers to donations received through federated fundraising campaigns, parent organizations, or subordinate

[68] The same procedures are used to calculate yearly MSA volunteer rates for the online publication, *Volunteering and Civic Life in America*, produced by the U.S. Government's Corporation for National & Community Service. The publication is available at: https://www.nationalservice.gov/vcla.
[69] For details about how these weights are calculated, please see the following document: Current Population Survey, September 2015, Technical Documentation, Attachment 2, pp. 2-3 – 2-4.
[70] For the *volunteer rate* calculation, I used the PWSSWGT weight, which is listed in the yearly CPS information file as "the final weight used for most tabulations."

organizations (GuideStar, para. 20). For forms filed between 2009 and 2015, *donations* was calculated by adding lines 1a ("Federated campaigns"), 1c ("Fundraising events"), 1d ("Related organizations"), and 1f ("All other contributions, gifts, grants, and similar amounts not included above") from Form 990 Part VIII. The average for *donations* for the 30 MSAs across the years is $46,604,579.80 (*S.D.* = 26,882,130.10), with a range from $9,486,234.00 (Salt Lake City, 2004) to $130,050,450.00 (Seattle, 2014).

Control variables. Analyses included the control variables *MSA unemployment rate*, *MSA median income*, and *MSA population*, all of which are yearly statistics available from the U.S. Bureau of the Census American Factfinder website and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. These variables were selected in order to control for the size of the MSA, as well as the economic well-being of each MSA. Economic factors in particular would seem to have ramifications on the amount of time and money residents could devote to volunteerism and charitable donations.

Analysis

As with the survey data, statistical analyses were conducted using hierarchical linear models in order to account for differences across MSAs.

Chapter 4: Original Survey, CPS, and United Way Results

Scholars have lamented the difficulty of measuring a sports team's non-economic impact on a community (Quirk & Fort, 1992; see also Johnson, 2001). In this chapter, I seek to remedy some of this lamentation by presenting the results of an original survey of 2,119 people across 56 U.S. metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), including those with and without major league baseball, basketball, football, and hockey teams. I also present my analysis of 2004-2015 U.S. Current Population Survey (CPS) and United Way charitable donation data from every MSA that has a major league team in one of the four aforementioned sports.

This chapter will proceed in order of the four hypotheses, with hypotheses 1-3 utilizing data from my original survey, and hypothesis 4 using CPS and donation data. The first hypothesis is the only one that involves comparing MSAs with and without major league sports teams. The second and third hypotheses focus on the role of local fan strength and franchise success, respectively, in MSAs with major league sports teams. The fourth hypothesis looks at how franchise success influences volunteerism and donations in MSAs with major league sports teams. The research question related to the interaction between gender and fan strength is addressed in the appropriate places throughout this chapter. For quick reference, a summary of all results is included at the end of this chapter (see Table 15), and the findings reported below will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

In order to account for the unique differences inherent in each MSA, data are clustered according to MSA. As such, hierarchical linear models (HLM) and hierarchical generalized linear models (HGLM) are used for statistical analyses related to the four hypotheses and accompanying research question.

To further clarify why HLM and HGLM were chosen to test my data, it is crucial to consider that many statistical tests rely on the assumption that observations are independent from one another, or, in other words, that subjects in a sample are not related to one another in some way that would influence sample measurements. In some cases, such as when data are clustered, sample subjects are related to one another, thus violating the independence assumption. This is the case with my survey data; the independence assumption is violated when I compare respondents from one MSA with respondents from a different MSA. This is because respondents living in a particular MSA have something in common with each other – for example, they all live in San Antonio – that could affect their responses to my survey questions in some systematic way. Hierarchical linear modeling, also called linear mixed modeling, takes into account this violation of the independence assumption by allowing for differences both within and between MSAs and by using different statistical procedures based on whether an effect is considered fixed or random.71 In my analyses, differences between

[71] In brief, the difference between fixed and random effects deals with variance. Fixed effects area assumed to not vary randomly, while random effects are assumed to vary randomly. For more information, see: https://stats.idre.ucla.edu/other/mult-pkg/introduction-to-linear-mixed-models/

MSAs are considered a random effect. Using a random intercept assumes that the intercept for the dependent variable is different for each MSA. Testing the random intercept compares the intercept of each MSA against the intercepts of the other MSAs to determine if they are significantly different from one another (my analyses use the Wald Z statistic to test differences among random intercepts). The individual-level and MSA-level fixed effects, on the other hand, test relationships in a way that suggests that, taking the differences between MSAs into account, the independent variables under investigation are related in a non-random way to the dependent variable.

H1: Cities with and without major league teams

Hypothesis 1 stated that (a) sense of belonging, (b) collective efficacy, (c) civic participation,[72] and (d) ICSN would be higher for those living in MSAs with major league sports teams compared to those living in MSAs without such teams. I will address each of these four relationships, starting with H1a. The total sample size of respondents included in H1 analyses is 2,119. In all the statistical models reported for the first hypothesis, general fan strength is added as a control variable after sports team, the hypothesized variable of interest, is added. This is done to uncover any unique effect of

[72] As discussed in Chapter 3, I have three civic participation variables: *traditional civic participation*, *non-traditional civic participation*, and the variable created by combining these two, *civic participation*. Tests reported in this chapter related to civic participation (H1c, H2c, and H3c) were done separately using all three of these variables. In no case were results different related to the independent variables of interest (i.e., *sports*, *general fan strength*, *local fan strength*, and *sports record*), although in a few cases some control variables changed significance levels. Because the results related to the variables of interest were the same regardless of which civic participation measure is used, I only report results related to one of the civic participation measures, namely the combined *civic participation* variable.

sports team outside of the presence of an individual's fan strength. In addition, to address RQ1, interactions effects are tested between *sports team* and *gender* for all H1 models. With one exception, reported below, no interactions were found to be significant between these two variables.

Table 5 reports the fixed and random effects of four hierarchical linear models that explain the relationship between the presence of major league sports teams and *sense of belonging* (H1a).[73] Model 1 is the intercept-only model, where the coefficient (*B* = 17.08, *SE* = 0.19) equals the *sense of belonging* grand mean for all the MSAs in my study. There are significant differences in *sense of belonging* among the 56 cities in the intercept-only model (Wald *Z* = 2.01, *p* = .04), but not in subsequent models.[74] In order to calculate the variance explained by the addition of my variable of interest (more on this below), model 2 adds individual-level and city-level fixed effect control variables. Model 3 adds the variable of interest, namely the dichotomous *sports team* variable,

[73] None of the tables for the HLM or GHLM analyses report a goodness of fit statistic. This omission is purposeful, as no agreed upon goodness-of-fit statistic exists for either of these types of mixed models. The goodness-of-fit tests that do exist are, at this point, only theoretical (Tang, Slud, & Pfeiffer, 2014; see also Edwards et al., 2008; Jaeger, Edwards, Das, & Sen, 2016)

[74] The lack of a significant Wald *Z* in subsequent models (i.e., models 2, 3, & 4) indicates that mean *sense of belonging* scores are not significantly different across the cities once the independent and control variables are added to the model (e.g., once participants' age, income, fan strength, etc., are taken into account, mean *sense of belonging* in Detroit is not significantly different from Pittsburgh, which is not significantly different from Sacramento, which is not significantly different from Boston, etc.). This pattern also holds for tests of hypotheses 2 and 3: the mean score of the dependent variable is significantly different across cities in the intercept-only models, but the dependent variable scores do not differ significantly across cities once the independent and control variables are added to the intercept-only models.

which is not significantly related to *sense of belonging* (*B* = -0.02, *SE* = 0.47, *p* = .97), providing no evidence for H1a.

Model 4 adds the *general fan strength* control variable, and owing to its significant relationship to the dependent variable – and inspired by RQ1 – I also add an interaction between *general fan strength* and *gender*. The interaction is significant (*B* = 0.44, *SE* = 0.15, *p* = .003). To get the simple effect of *general fan strength* for females and males, I ran the model with the female group as the reference group (female = 1, male = 0) and then the male group as the reference group (male = 1, female = 0), respectively. The simple effect of *general fan strength* for females was positive and significant (*B* = 0.48, *SE* = 0.09, *p* < .001). The simple effect of *general fan strength* for males was also positive and significant, but was steeper for males than females (*B* = 0.92, *SE* = 0.11, *p* < .001).[75] The relationship between *gender* and *general fan strength* as

[75] A note on interpreting interaction effects in hierarchical linear models: A significant interaction effect indicates that, using the variables in my study as an example, *general fan strength's* effect on *sense of belonging* depends on the respondent's gender (see Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005, p. 133). In other words, females and males are significantly different from one another when it comes to how *general fan strength* affects their *sense of belonging*. A significant interaction effect, however, *does not* tell whether *general fan strength* has a significant relationship to *sense of belonging* for females or for males. To make this determination, it is necessary to take several additional steps. First, I have to determine which group – female or male – is my reference group in my full statistical model. With female as my reference group (in my case, when females are coded as a "1", and males are coded as "0" in *gender*), the "main effect" for *general fan strength* becomes the "simple effect," or the slope of *general fan strength* for the female reference group (*B* = 0.48, *SE* = 0.09, *p* < .001). Second, I have to re-run the model with male as my reference group (males are now coded as "1", and females are coded as "0" in *gender*). Now, the "simple effect" for *general fan strength* is the slope of *general fan strength* for the male reference group (*B* = 0.92, *SE* = 0.11, *p* < .001). The *B* = 0.92 coefficient for males can also be calculated without changing reference groups or re-running the full model. This is done by adding the simple effect coefficient for *general fan strength* with females as the reference group (0.48) and the interaction effect coefficient (0.44), or 0.48 + 0.44 = 0.92. Doing this, however, does not provide the standard error or the *p*-value for males, which makes changing the reference group and re-running the model a more informative and complete method for interpreting the interaction.

it relates to *sense of belonging* is visualized in Figure 2. In essence, as *general fan strength* increased, *sense of belonging* was greater for males than for females.

In order to determine an effect size, I used an index of proportional reduction (see Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a), hereafter referred to as IPR, to determine the change in variance between model 2 (the model that includes all controls but no sports variables) and model 4 (the model that includes all controls *plus* the sports-related variables). The IPR equation is:

$$IPR = (\text{Level-1 error}_{(\text{Model 2})} - \text{Level-1 error}_{(\text{Model 4})})/(\text{Level-1 error}_{(\text{Model2})})$$

$$= (45.38-43.63)/(45.38) = 0.039$$

This suggests that when added into the model with controls, the sports-related variables account for 3.9% percent of the variance in sense of belonging. *General fan strength*, and not whether or not the city has a sports team, is solely responsible for this explanation of variance, as *sports team*, when added alone in model 3, does not produce a change in level-1 error from model 2.

Table 5. Hierarchical Linear Models of Sense of Belonging and Sports Team

	Coefficient (SE)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual-level fixed effects				
Mean sense of belonging	17.08 (0.19)***	17.67 (0.34)***	17.67 (0.35)***	17.89 (0.34)***
Female		-0.84 (0.31)**	-0.84 (0.31)**	-0.22 (0.31)
Age		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Income		0.31 (0.15)*	0.31 (0.15)*	0.18 (0.15)
Education		-0.04 (0.10)	-0.04 (0.10)	-0.08 (0.10)
Residential tenure		0.10 (0.02)***	0.10 (0.02)***	0.10 (0.02)***
Homeowner		1.94 (0.34)***	1.94 (0.34)***	1.86 (0.33)***
Race[a] (1=white)		0.07 (0.35)	0.07 (0.35)	0.10 (0.34)
Household size		0.18 (0.08)*	0.18 (0.08)*	0.17 (0.08)*
Political ideology[b]		-0.63 (0.14)***	-0.63 (0.14)***	-0.49 (0.14)***
Question order[c]		-0.32 (0.30)	-0.32 (0.30)	-0.07 (0.29)
General fan strength				0.48 (0.09)***
MSA-level fixed effects				
Population		-0.13 (0.05)*	-0.13 (0.06)*	-0.12 (0.05)*
Unemployment		0.37 (0.28)	0.37 (0.29)	0.33 (0.27)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		-0.10 (0.07)	-0.10 (0.07)	-0.08 (0.07)
White households		0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Sports team			-0.02 (0.47)	-0.14 (0.45)
Interaction				
Female*General fan strength				0.44 (0.15)**
Random effect				
Mean sense of belonging				
Variance	0.76 (0.38)	0.41 (0.32)	0.44 (0.33)	0.31 (0.30)
Wald Z	2.01*	1.30	1.34	1.05
Level-1 error (sigma hat squared)	48.90	45.38	45.38	43.63

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.

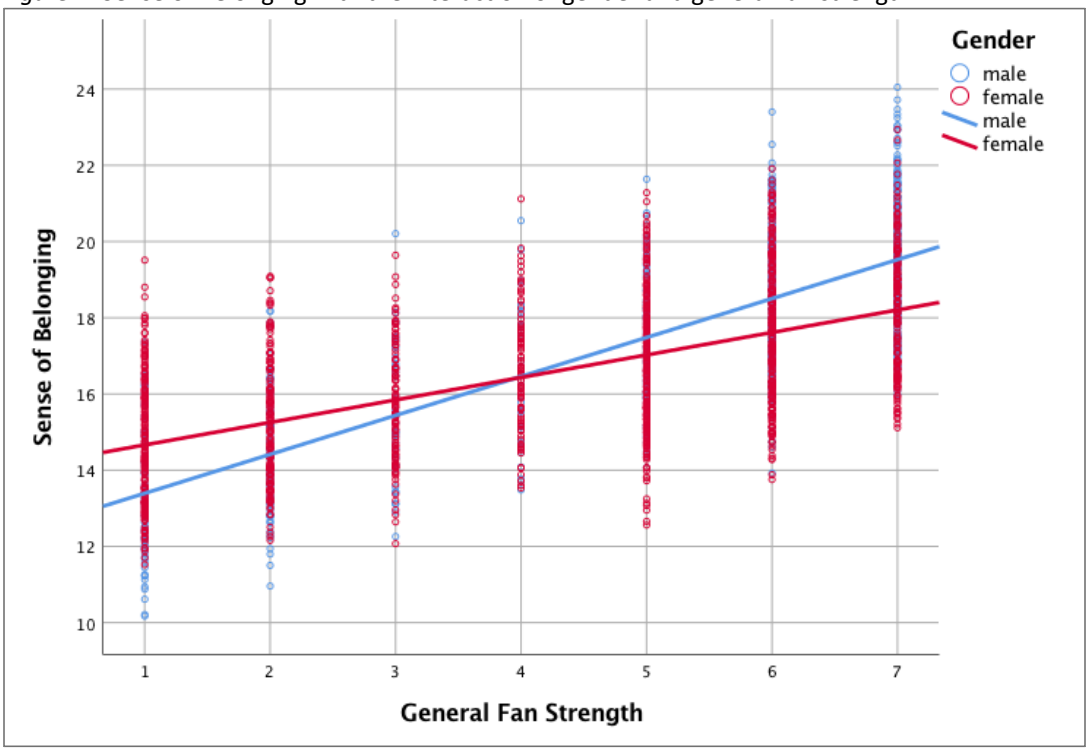
[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.

[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal

[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 2. Sense of Belonging with the interaction of gender and general fan strength



Turning to H1b, Table 6 reports the fixed and random effects of four hierarchical linear models that indicate the relationship between *collective efficacy* and the presence of a major league sports team. Model 1 is the intercept-only model, with the coefficient being equal to the grand mean *collective efficacy* scores for all cities. As indicated by non-significant Wald *Z* tests, none of the cities have significantly different *collective efficacy* scores in any of the models. Model 2 includes individual-level and city-level fixed effect controls, and model 3 adds the *sports team* variable. Again, *sports team* does not have a significant relationship with the dependent variable, (*B* = 0.24, *SE* = 0.49, *p* = .62), providing no evidence for H1b.

Table 6. Hierarchical Linear Models of Collective Efficacy and Sports Team

	Coefficient (SE)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual-level fixed effects				
Mean collective efficacy	32.74 (0.19)***	33.71 (0.34)***	33.75 (0.35)***	33.94 (0.35)***
Female		0.61 (0.31)*	0.60 (0.31)*	0.96 (0.31)**
Age		0.05 (0.01)***	0.05 (0.01)***	0.05 (0.01)***
Income		0.86 (0.15)***	0.86 (0.16)***	0.78 (0.15)***
Education		0.01 (0.10)	0.01 (0.10)	-0.02 (0.10)
Residential tenure		0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Homeowner		1.77 (0.34)***	1.77 (0.34)***	1.72 (0.34)***
Race[a] (1=white)		-0.33 (0.35)	-0.34 (0.35)	-0.32 (0.30)
Household size		0.20 (0.08)**	0.21 (0.08)**	0.20 (0.08)*
Political ideology[b]		0.24 (0.14)	0.24 (0.14)	0.32 (0.14)*
Question order[c]		-0.51 (0.30)	-0.51 (0.30)	-0.34 (0.30)
General fan strength				0.42 (0.07)***
MSA-level fixed effects				
Population		-0.03 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.4 (0.06)
Unemployment		0.44 (0.29)	0.45 (.30)	0.43 (0.29)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		-0.02 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.07)
White households		0.05 (0.02)*	0.05 (0.02)*	0.05 (0.02)*
Sports team			0.24 (0.49)	0.15 (0.48)
Interaction				
Female*Sports team				0.24 (0.12)*
Random effect				
Mean collective efficacy				
Variance	0.73 (0.37)	0.52 (0.33)	0.55 (0.34)	0.51 (0.34)
Wald Z	1.94	1.56	1.60	1.51
Level-1 error (sigma hat squared)	49.23	45.65	45.65	45.00

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.

[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.

[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal

[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Model 4 includes *general fan strength*, which proves to have a significant positive association with *collective efficacy* (*B* = 0.42, *SE* = 0.07, *p* < .001). The *general fan strength* X *gender* interaction was not significant (*B* = 0.22, *SE* = 0.15, *p* = .12), and therefore was not included when calculating the results reported in model 4. The IPR calculation for H1b is: (45.65-45.00)/(45.65) = 0.014. Because adding *sports team* to model 2 did not change level-1 error, this IPR suggests that the inclusion of *general fan strength* (and not *sports team*) accounts for 1.4% of the variance in *collective efficacy*.

Due to the non-normal distribution of the *civic participation* data, results for H1c are determined using a generalized linear model with a negative binomial distribution. Table 7 shows four models like those already reported, including the intercept-only model 1, where the coefficient is equal to the grand mean *civic participation* score for all 56 cities (*B* = 0.97, *S.E.* = 0.02, *p* < .001). Model 2 adds the individual and MSA-level control variables, and model 3 adds *sports team*. H1c is not confirmed: whether or not a city has a major league sports team is not significantly related to *civic participation* (*B* = -0.01, *SE* = 0.06, *p* = .87).

General fan strength is positively related to civic participation (*B* = 0.08, *SE* = 0.01, *p* < .001). The interaction between *general fan strength* and *gender* was not significant (*B* = -0.00, *SE* = 0.02, *p* = .92), and so was excluded from the model 4 results reported in Table 7. However, the *sports team* X *gender* interaction is significant in model 4 (*B* = 0.24, *SE* = 0.12, *p* < .04). This interaction was analyzed according to the procedures outlined above in footnote 73. Results showed that while the interaction

was significant, the relationship was not significant for females and *civic participation,* nor for males and *civic participation*.[76]

Table 7. Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models of Civic Participation and Sports Team

	Coefficient (SE)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual-level fixed effects				
Mean civic participation	0.97 (0.02)	0.95 (0.05)***	0.95 (0.05)***	0.97 (0.05)***
Female		-0.07 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
Age		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Income		0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Education		0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Residential tenure		0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)
Homeowner		0.09 (0.05)	0.09 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)
Race[a] (1=white)		-0.08 (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)
Household size		0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)
Political ideology[b]		0.09 (0.02)***	0.09 (0.02)***	0.11 (0.02)***
Question order[c]		-0.02 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)
General fan strength				0.08 (0.01)***
MSA-level fixed effects				
Population		-0.01 (0.01)*	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Unemployment		0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
White households		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Sports team			-0.01 (0.06)	-0.03(0.06)
Interaction				
Female*General fan strength				--

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.
[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.
[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal
[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

[76] The "simple effect" for the female reference group was not significant (*B* = 0.08, *SE* = 0.08, *p* < .32), and the "simple effect" for the male reference group was only marginally significant (*B* = 0.16, *SE* = 0.09, *p* < .08).

Hypothesis 1d states that those living in major league cities will have higher *ICSN* than those living in cities without major league teams. Table 8 shows the fixed and random effects from hierarchical linear models testing this relationship. Model 1 shows the intercept-only model, which indicates that the grand mean *ICSN* score for all cities in the model is 21.45 (*SE* = 0.30, $p < .001$). There are significant differences in *ICSN* across the 56 cities in the intercept-only model (Wald $Z = 2.21$, $p = .03$), but in none of the subsequent models. Model 2 adds individual-level and city-level controls, and model 3 adds *sports team*, which, again, is not significantly related to the dependent variable (*B* = 0.39, *SE* = 0.76, $p = .62$).

Model 4 adds *general fan strength*, which proves to have a significant, positive relationship with *ICSN* (*B* = 1.34, *SE* = 0.11, $p < .001$). The interaction between *general fan strength* and *gender* was not significant (*B* = -0.29, *SE* = 0.22, $p = .19$) and, therefore, not included in Table 8 model 4.

Table 8. Hierarchical Linear Models of ICSN and Sports Team

	Coefficient (SE)			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Individual-level fixed effects				
Mean ICSN	21.45 (0.30)***	22.56 (0.52)***	22.63 (0.54)***	23.17 (0.52)***
Female		-0.80 (0.46)	-0.81 (0.46)	0.31 (0.46)
Age		0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Income		0.60 (0.23)*	0.60 (0.23)*	0.36 (0.23)
Education		0.50 (0.15)***	0.50 (0.15)***	0.42 (0.14)**
Residential tenure		0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Homeowner		3.33 (0.52)***	3.34 (0.52)***	3.10 (0.50)***
Race[a] (1=white)		-1.63 (0.53)**	-1.63 (0.53)**	-1.57 (0.51)**
Household size		0.49 (0.12)***	0.49 (0.12)***	0.45 (0.11)***
Political ideology[b]		-1.03 (0.22)***	-1.03 (0.22)***	-0.75 (0.21)***
Question order[c]		-0.02 (0.45)	-0.02 (0.45)	-0.51 (0.44)
General fan strength				1.34 (0.11)***
MSA-level fixed effects				
Population		-0.19 (0.09)*	-0.20 (0.09)*	-0.19 (0.09)*
Unemployment		0.29 (0.46)	0.31 (0.46)	0.21 (0.44)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		-0.13 (0.11)	-0.13 (0.12)	-0.10 (0.11)
White households		-0.02 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.03)
Sports team			0.39 (0.76)	0.06 (0.73)
Interaction				
Female*General fan strength				--
Random effect				
Mean ICSN				
Variance	2.022 (0.92)	1.45 (0.85)	1.52 (0.88)	1.34 (0.82)
Wald Z	2.21*	1.70	1.73	1.63
Level-1 error (sigma hat squared)	111.61	102.38	102.38	95.36

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.

[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.

[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal

[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The level-1 error terms in models 2 and 3 were nearly identical, suggesting that the inclusion of the *sport team* variable did not explain any variance between the two models. Level-1 error was different between models 2 and 4, and so the IPR was calculated using these two models: (102.38-95.36)/(102.38) = 0.069. This suggest that the inclusion of the *general fan strength* variable in the model with controls and *sports team* accounts for 6.9% of the variance in *ICSN*.

Additional hypothesis 1 analysis with comparable cities

Some of the MSAs used in my statistical tests have markedly different population sizes from one another. For example, New York City has a population greater than 20 million, whereas Evansville, Indiana, the least populous MSA in my dataset, has a population of just over 300,000. The top-12 MSAs, population-wise, all have major league sports teams, and not until Riverside, California, ranked 13th in population (roughly 4.5 million residents), do we come to an MSA without a major league sports team. With this in mind, the analyses in this chapter use statistical techniques and a number of MSA-level variables, including population size, to control for differences among MSAs. In spite of this, it remains noticeable that the total population of MSAs with teams (163,388,470) is vastly larger than MSAs without teams (18,624,162). Therefore, as a further test to verify that the above findings are not an artifact of incomparably-sized MSAs, I reran all H1 analyses using a subset of MSAs. This subset consisted of all 13 MSAs in my sample that did not have a major league sports team, as

well as 12 MSAs with teams that had the closest comparable populations.[77] Table 9 lists each of the MSAs used for this additional analysis, along with their respective population sizes.

With replication of the H1a through H1d analyses, results for the dependent and independent variables of interest were identical to those obtained when using the full sample. One interesting difference related to a control variable, however, is worth noting. When replicating the *collective efficacy* models (H1b), the results of the full model showed that the *question order* variable was now related, in a significant and negative way, to *collective efficacy* (B = -1.11, SE = 0.49, p = .02). This means that survey respondents who saw sports-related questions before seeing CIT-related questions had a significantly lower *collective efficacy* score than those who saw CIT-related questions before seeing sports-related questions, a finding that runs counter to what my causal theory would anticipate. Several possible explanations for this question order finding exist, including those related to the franchise success of the teams in the subset of MSAs selected for the additional analyses, as well as the influence of teams in smaller MSAs. These will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

[77] The MSAs with teams were chosen based on the closest possible match in population size to the MSAs without teams. Because two of the 13 MSAs without teams were relatively small (South Bend and Evansville), only 12 MSAs with teams were chosen, including the one "small" MSA with a team (Green Bay).

Table 9. Subset of MSAs Selected for H1 Analysis Replication (sorted by population size)

MSAs With No Major League Teams			MSAs With Major League Teams		
MSA Order (By Pop.)	MSA Principal City	Population (2016)	MSA order (By Pop.)	MSA Principal City	Population (2016)
13	Riverside, CA	4,527,837	12	Phoenix, AZ	4,661,537
31	Austin, TX	2,056,405	32	Cleveland, OH	2,055,612
37	Virginia Beach, VA	1,726,907	36	Nashville, TN	1,865,298
38	Providence, RI	1,614,750	39	Milwaukee, WI	1,572,482
44	Louisville, KY	1,283,430	40	Jacksonville, FL	1,478,212
45	Richmond, VA	1,281,708	41	Oklahoma City, OK	1,373,211
47	Hartford, CT	1,206,836	42	Memphis, TN	1,342,842
49	Birmingham, AL	1,147,417	43	Raleigh, NC	1,302,946
51	Rochester, NY	1,078,879	46	New Orleans, LA	1,268,883
52	Grand Rapids, MI	1,047,099	48	Salt Lake City, UT	1,186,187
53	Tucson, AZ	1,016,206	50	Buffalo, NY	1,132,804
156	South Bend, IN	320740	157	Green Bay, WI	318236
158	Evansville, IN	315948			
		Total Pop.: 18,624,162			Total Pop.: 19,558,250

Note. Populations are based on 2016 estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau.

H2: Local fan strength

My second hypothesis stated that an individual's level of fandom in a local team (*local fan strength*) would be positively related to (a) sense of belonging, (b) collective efficacy, (c) civic participation, and (d) ICSN. The remainder of the analyses in this chapter deal only with MSAs (n = 43) that have at least one major league sports team. With the exclusion of survey respondents from MSAs with no major league teams, the number of respondents used for H2 and H3 analyses is 1,731. Also of note, because being a sports fan in general is not the same as being a fan of the local team (Wann et al., 2004), all H2 and H3 analyses will add *general fan strength* as a control variable.

Hierarchical linear models with fixed and random effects were used to test the relationship between *local fan strength* and *sense of belonging*. Table 10 reports the findings from four models.[78] Wald *Z* tests for all four models show that *sense of belonging* scores are not significantly different among the 43 major league sports MSAs used in the analysis. Model 1 is the intercept-only model (*B* = 16.95, *SE* = 0.22, *p* < .001), Model 2 adds the non-sports control variables, and model 3 adds *general fan strength* as a control. Model 4 adds the variable of interest, *local fan strength*, as well as the *local fan strength* x *gender* interaction. The interaction is significant (*B* = -0.52, *SE* = 0.16, *p* = .001). *Local fan strength's* simple effect on females is not significant (*B* = 0.13, *SE* = 0.13, *p* = .32), but it is significant, and positive, on males (*B* = 0.65, *SE* = 0.15, *p* < .001). The relationship is depicted in Figure 3, with the results suggesting a confirmation of H2a: *local fan strength* is positively related to *sense of belonging*, but the relationship is conditional upon *gender*, with a significant effect for males, but not for females.

[78] Please note that "Model 5" in the subsequent tables refers to statistical tests conducted for H3, and model 5 results will be detailed below in a later section of this chapter.

Table 10. Hierarchical Linear Models of Sense of Belonging and Local Fan Strength/Sports Record

	Coefficient (SE)				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 (H3a)
Individual-level fixed effects					
Mean sense of belonging	16.95 (0.22)***	17.87 (0.38)***	18.12 (0.37)***	18.05 (0.38)***	18.05 (0.37)***
Female		-0.72 (0.34)*	-0.22 (0.34)	-0.26 (0.34)	-0.26 (0.34)
Age		-0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
Income		0.32 (0.17)	0.19 (0.17)	0.22 (0.17)	0.20 (0.17)
Education		-0.09 (0.11)	-0.11 (0.11)	-0.08 (0.12)	-0.09 (0.11)
Residential tenure		0.09 (0.02)***	0.09 (0.02)***	0.11 (0.02)***	0.08 (0.02)***
Homeowner		2.23 (0.38)***	2.17 (0.37)***	2.06 (0.37)***	2.06 (0.37)***
Race[a] (1=white)		0.05 (0.39)	0.05 (0.38)	0.09 (0.40)	0.09 (0.38)
Household size		0.18 (0.09)*	0.17 (0.09)	0.16 (0.09)	0.16 (0.09)
Political ideology[b]		-0.58 (0.16)***	-0.47 (0.16)**	-0.58 (0.17)***	-0.52 (0.16)***
Question order[c]		-0.36 (0.33)	-0.14 (0.33)	-0.04 (0.33)	-0.05 (0.33)
General fan strength			0.62 (0.08)***	0.38 (0.12)***	0.38 (0.12)***
Local fan strength (H2a)				0.13 (0.13)	0.12 (0.13)
MSA-level fixed effects					
Population		-0.12 (0.06)	-0.11 (0.06)	-0.13 (0.06)*	-0.13 (0.06)*
Unemployment		0.44 (0.35)	0.39 (0.34)	0.43 (0.35)	0.50 (0.35)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		-0.09 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.08)	-0.06 (0.08)
White households		0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)	0.01 (0.03)
Sports record (H3a)					0.02 (0.02)
Interaction					
Female*Local fan strength				-0.52 (0.16)***	-0.52 (0.16)***
Random effect					
Mean sense of belonging Variance	0.81 (0.44)	0.57 (0.39)	0.53 (0.38)	0.64 (0.41)	0.57 (0.41)
Wald Z	1.84	1.45	1.39	1.57	1.39
Level-1 error	49.01	45.43	43.96	43.33	43.36

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.

[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.

[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal

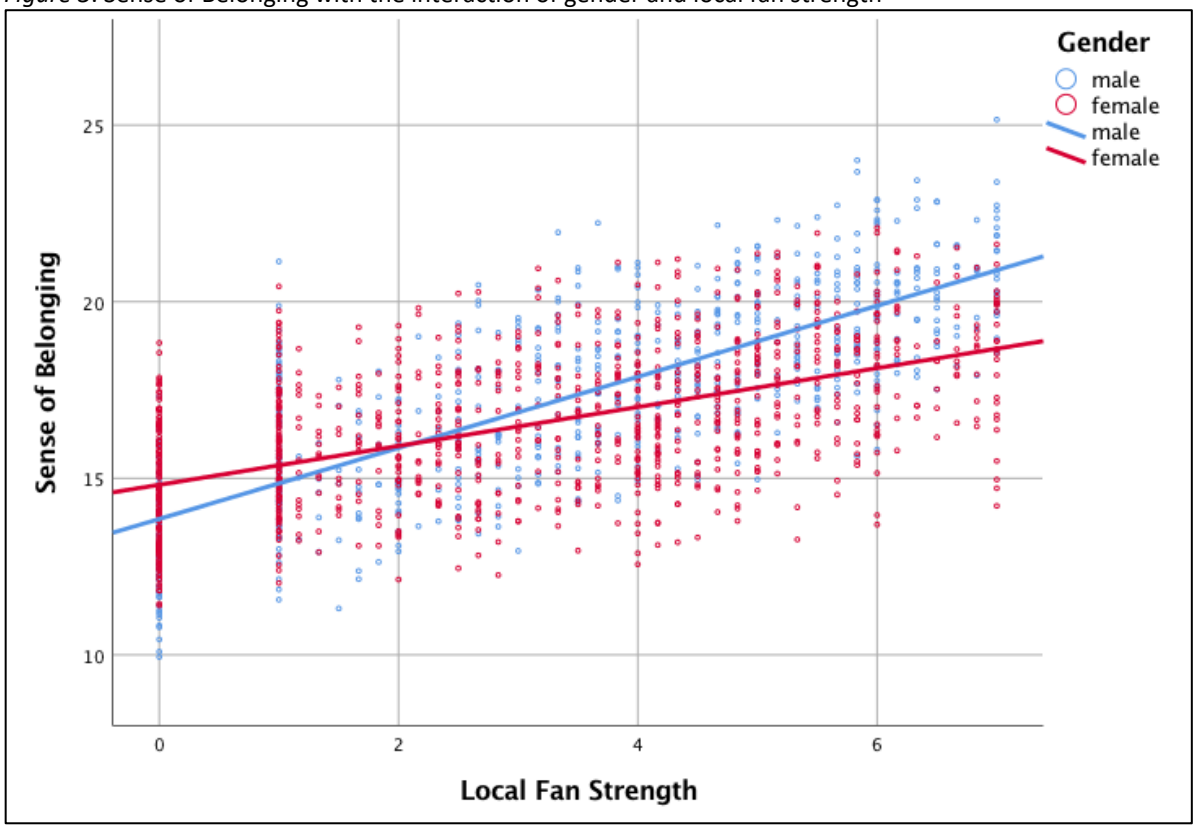
[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

The IPR, (45.43-43.33)/45.33 = 0.046, shows that adding the *general fan strength* and *local fan strength* variables explains 4.6% of the variance in *sense of belonging*. The variance explained by adding the *local fan strength* to a model that already has *general fan strength*, (43.96-43.33)/43.96 = 0.014, is 1.4%.

H2b states that *local fan strength* will be positively related to *collective efficacy*. Again, four hierarchical linear models (see Table 11) with fixed and random effects were used to test this hypothesis, the accompanying gender-related research question, and the overall effect size of sports-related variables on individual and community-related controls. Model 1 is the intercept-only model (B = 32.76, SE = 0.23, p < .001). *Collective efficacy* scores are significantly different across MSAs in model 1 ($Z = 2.13$, $p = .03$), but not in the three subsequent models. Model 2 introduces all non-sports controls and model 3 adds the *general fan strength control*. Model 4 adds *local fan strength*, but not the *local fan strength* X *gender* interaction, as the interaction, when tested, was only marginally significant ($B = -0.27$, $SE = 0.16$, $p = .08$). Although *general fan strength* remained positively and significantly related to *collective efficacy* in model 4 ($B = 0.39$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .001$), *local fan strength* was not significantly related to *collective efficacy* ($B = 0.08$, $SE = 0.12$, $p = .51$), thus providing no evidence for H2b.

Figure 3. Sense of Belonging with the interaction of gender and local fan strength



When calculating the IPR, (44.71-43.87)/44.71 = 0.019, the result indicates that the added sports variables explain 1.9% of the variance in *collective efficacy*.

Table 11. Hierarchical Linear Models of Collective Efficacy and Local Fan Strength/Sports Record

	Coefficient (SE)				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 (H3b)
Individual-level fixed effects					
Mean collective efficacy	32.76 (0.23)***	33.93 (0.38)***	34.12 (0.37)***	34.08 (0..38)***	32.06 (0.90)***
Female		0.73 (0.34)*	1.09 (0.34)***	1.04 (0.34)**	1.02 (0.34)**
Age		0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)***
Income		0.75 (0.17)***	0.65 (0.17)***	0.66 (0.17)***	0.67 (0.17)***
Education		0.04 (0.10)	0.03 (0.11)	0.02 (0.11)	0.01 (0.11)
Residential tenure		0.00 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)
Homeowner		2.14 (0.38)***	2.09 (0.38)***	2.05 (0.37)***	2.06 (0.38)***
Race[a] (1=white)		-0.61 (0.38)	-0.60 (0.38)	-0.64 (0.38)	-0.62 (0.38)
Household size		0.27 (0.09)**	0.26 (0.09)**	0.25 (0.09)**	0.25 (0.09)**
Political ideology[b]		0.30 (0.16)	0.37 (0.16)*	0.38 (0.16)*	0.38 (0.16)*
Question order[c]		-0.52 (0.33)	-0.36 (0.33)	-0.34 (0.33)	-0.34 (0.33)
General fan strength			0.45 (0.08)***	0.39 (0.12)**	0.40 (0.12)***
Local fan strength (H2b)				0.08 (0.12)	0.05 (0.12)
MSA-level fixed effects					
Population		-0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.05)
Unemployment		0.87 (0.36)*	0.83 (0.35)*	0.86 (0.36)*	0.97 (0.33)**
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		0.05 (0.08)	0.06 (0.08)	0.07 (0.08)	0.05 (0.08)
White households		0.07 (0.03)**	0.07 (0.03)**	0.07 (0.03)*	0.06 (0.03)
Sports record (H3b)					0.04 (0.02)*
Interaction					
Female*Local fan strength				--	--
Random effect					
Mean collective efficacy					
Variance	1.03 (0.48)	0.65 (0.40)	0.62 (0.40)	0.64 (0.40)	0.37 (0.36)
Wald Z	2.13*	1.62	1.56	1.59	1.04
Level-1 error	48.42	44.71	43.93	43.87	43.90

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.

[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.

[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal

[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Civic participation (H2c) is non-normally distributed, so statistical analysis requires the use of a hierarchical generalized linear model, as reported in Table 12. Models 1 and 2 are, respectively, the intercept-only (variance = 0.96, S.E. = 0.03, $p <$ .001) and non-sports control variables models. Model 3 adds the *general fan strength* variables, and model 4 adds the variable of interest, *local fan strength*, which has a significant and positive relationship with *civic participation* (B = 0.07, SE = 0.02, $p <$ .001). This finding confirms H2c; as *local fan strength* increases, so does participation in civic activities. The interaction between *local fan strength* and *gender* was not significant (B = -0.03, SE = 0.03, p = .31) and not included in model 4. Of note, when *local fan strength* was added to the model, *general fan strength* was no longer significantly related to *civic participation* (B = 0.02, SE = 0.02, p = .28). This is the only instance among all the analyses that include both *general fan strength* and *local fan strength* when *general fan strength* drops below significance, suggesting perhaps a unique association between being a fan of a local team and engaging in civically-minded activities. Level-1 error variance is not reported in a hierarchical generalized linear model and so no IPR was tabulated.

Table 12. Hierarchical Generalized Linear Models of Civic Participation and Local Fan Strength/Sports Record

	Coefficient (SE)				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 (H3c)
Individual-level fixed effects					
Mean civic participation	0.96 (0.03)	0.97 (0.06)***	0.99 (0.06)***	0.97 (0.06)***	0.97 (0.06)***
Female		-0.02 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)	0.03 (0.05)
Age		-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Income		0.04 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)	0.03 (0.03)
Education		0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Residential tenure		0.01 (0.00)	0.01 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Homeowner		0.08 (0.06)	0.07 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)	0.05 (0.06)
Race[a] (1=white)		-0.04 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.04 (0.06)
Household size		0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.01)
Political ideology[b]		0.08 (0.03)***	0.10 (0.03)***	0.09 (0.03)***	0.09 (0.03)***
Question order[c]		-0.04 (0.06)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)
General fan strength			0.07 (0.01)***	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)
Local fan strength (H2c)				0.07 (0.02)***	0.07 (0.02)***
MSA-level fixed effects					
Population		-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)*	-0.02 (0.01)*
Unemployment		0.05 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)	0.05 (0.04)	0.05 (0.05)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families with children under 18		-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
White households		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Sports record (H3c)					0.00 (0.00)
Interaction					
Female*Local fan strength				--	--

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.
[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.
[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal
[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

H2d examines the relationship between *local fan strength* and *ICSN*. Models are constructed as before (see Table 13), and in none of the four models were the Wald *Z*

tests significant, suggesting that *ICSN* scores are not significantly different across the sample cities. The *local fan strength* X *gender* interaction in model 4 is significant (*B* = -0.68, *SE* = 0.29, *p* = .02). *Local fan strength*'s simple effect is positive and significant for females (*B* = 0.61, *SE* = 0.20, *p* = .002) and for males (*B* = 1.20, *SE* = 0.21, *p* < .001). This finding confirms H2d, with the caveat that the effect of *local fan strength* on *ICSN* is greater for males than females (see Figure 4). The calculation for the IPR, (100.23-93.34)/100.23 = 0.069, indicates that adding the sports variables to the control model explains 6.9% of the variance in *ICSN*. Looking closer at the two sports variables, another calculation of the IPR between models 3 and 4, (93.34-91.49)/93.34 = 0.020, shows that the addition of the *local fan strength* variable and interaction explains an additional 2.0% of the *ICSN* variance compared to the model 3.

Table 13. Hierarchical Linear Models of ICSN and Local Fan Strength/Sports Record

	Coefficient (SE)				
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5 (H3d)
Individual-level fixed effects					
Mean ICSN	21.35 (0.33)***	22.72 (0.57)***	23.22 (0.55)***	23.05 (0.54)***	23.05 (0.53)***
Female		-0.48 (0.51)	0.60 (0.50)	0.53 (0.50)	0.51 (0.50)
Age		0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.02)
Income		0.73 (0.26)**	0.44 (0.25)	0.49 (0.25)*	0.50 (0.25)*
Education		0.47 (0.16)**	0.42 (0.16)**	0.46 (0.16)**	0.44 (0.16)**
Residential tenure		0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)	-0.00 (0.03)
Homeowner		3.37 (0.57)***	3.18 (0.55)***	2.95 (0.55)***	2.96 (0.55)***
Racea (1=white)		-1.59 (0.58)**	-1.58 (0.56)**	-1.56 (0.56)**	-1.57 (0.56)**
Household size		0.50 (0.13)***	0.48 (0.13)***	0.47 (0.13)***	0.46 (0.13)***
Political ideologyb		-1.01 (0.24)***	-0.79 (0.23)***	-0.83 (0.23)***	-0.84 (0.23)***
Question orderc		-0.18 (0.50)	0.27 (0.48)	0.33 (0.48)	0.33 (0.48)
General fan strength			1.34 (0.12)***	0.75 (0.17)***	0.75 (0.17)***
Local fan strength (H2d)				0.61 (0.20)**	0.58 (0.20)**
MSA-level fixed effects					
Population		-0.20 (0.09)*	-0.19 (0.08)*	-0.23 (0.08)**	-0.23 (0.08)**
Unemployment		0.30 (0.53)	0.20 (0.50)	0.28 (0.49)	0.39 (0.47)
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Families w/children under 18		-0.16 (0.12)	-0.12 (0.12)	-0.09 (0.12)	-0.11 (0.11)
White households		-0.01 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)
Sports record (H3d)					0.04 (0.02)
Interaction					
Female*Local fan strength				-0.59 (0.23)**	-0.60 (0.23)**
Random effect					
Mean ICSN					
Variance	1.88 (1.00)	1.35 (0.92)	1.11 (0.86)	0.94 (0.81)	0.67 (0.78)
Wald Z	1.92	0.92	1.30	1.16	0.86
Level-1 error	109.35	100.23	93.34	91.49	91.56

Note. All continuous independent variables are grand-mean centered.

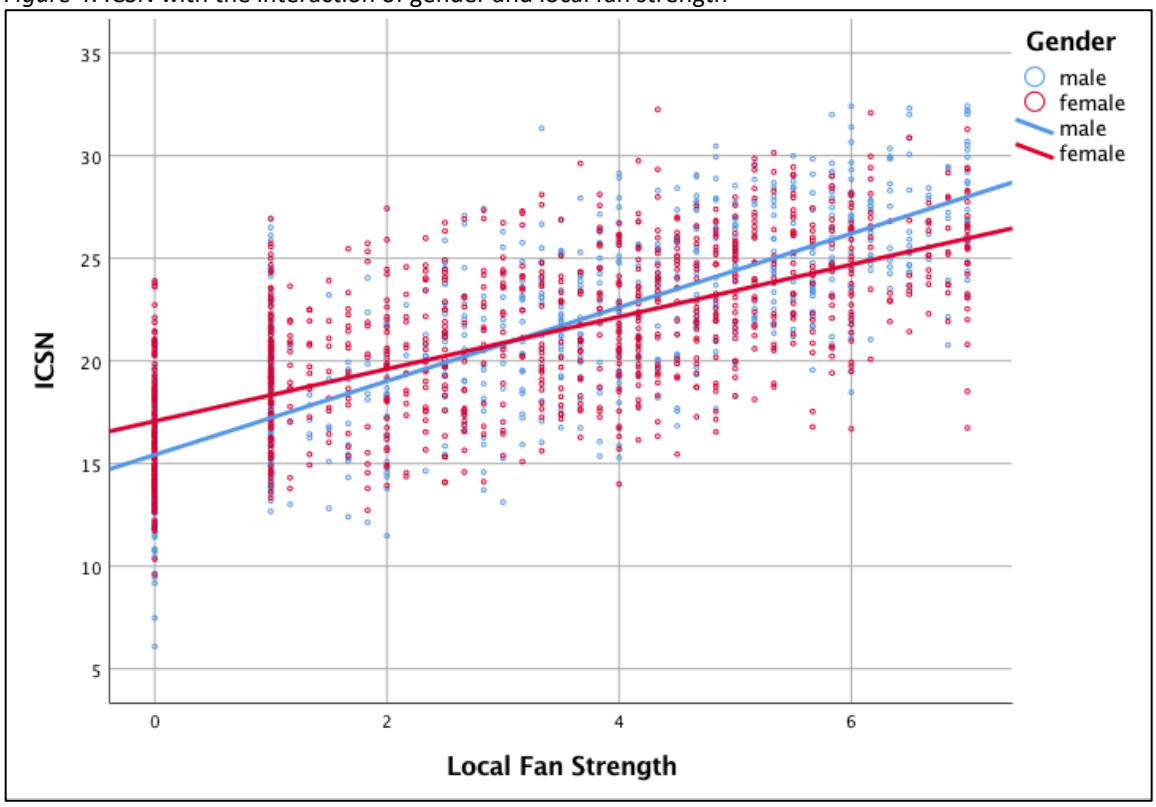
[a] non-whites = 0, whites = 1.

[b] political ideology is a continuous variable on a 1-5 scale; higher scores = more liberal

[c] respondent: saw sports questions first = 0, saw city questions first = 1.

* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Figure 4. ICSN with the interaction of gender and local fan strength



H3: Team success

Hypothesis 3 stated that (a) sense of belonging, (b) collective efficacy, (c) civic participation, and (d) ICSN are positively related to the success of the sports franchises in each MSA. As stated in the previous chapter, I constructed three separate measures of team success: *sports record*, *playoffs*, and *championship*.[79] In no case, were playoffs or championship significantly related to any of the dependent variables tested in H3 (or H4, for that matter). *Sports record*, on the other hand, proved to have a positive, significant relationship with *collective efficacy* (and a positive, marginally significant

[79] Due to the high correlations among the *sports record*, *playoffs*, and *championship* variables, these variables could not be tested alongside each other in the same model.

relationship with *ICSN*).[80] For these reasons, I exclude *playoffs* and *championship* from the results reported for H3 and H4. In addition, interactions between *sports record* and *gender* were tested for each H3 model, and in no model was this interaction significant. For this reason, the interaction is excluded from the H3 models.

In addition to the individual-level demographic and MSA-level control variables used in the statistical analyses up to this point, I also used *general fan strength* and *local fan strength* to control for an individual's relationship with sports and any local major league teams. With this in mind, H3 analyses build upon the analyses reported for H2, with model 4 acting as the full control model, and model 5 showing the results when the variable of interest – *sports record* – is added. For example, in testing *sports record's* association with *sense of belonging*, I used as controls all of the variables seen in model 4 of Table 10. Since results for models 1-4 have already been tabulated and reported in the "Hypothesis 2" section above, I refer the reader to the H2 results for the detailed explanations of the intercept-only and control variable models (models 1-4) used for H3 analyses.

To assess the relationship between *sports record* and *sense of belonging* (H3a), I used hierarchical linear modeling with random and fixed effects. Model 5 in Table 10 shows the addition of *sports record* to the variables in model 4. The Wald *Z* statistic in

[80] In his examination of sports teams' influence on mayoral elections, Miller (2013) had a similar outcome: playoff appearances and championships were not related to mayoral outcomes, whereas regular season records were. This being the case, Miller (2013) also chose to focus his analyses and discussion on *sports record*.

model 5 remains non-significant (Z = 1.39, p = .17), indicating no significant differences in *sense of belonging* scores among the cities in the model. In fact, no Wald Z statistics were significant for any tests related to the third hypothesis. As seen in model 5, the association between *sports record* and *sense of belonging* is not significant (B = 0.02, SE = 0.02, p = .21), providing no evidence for H3a. It should be noted that no IPR will be calculated for any of the hypothesis 3 tests. This is because level-1 error, in each H3 test where it is available, is between 0.03 and 0.07 points higher in models 5 than in the respective models 4, suggesting that the addition of *sports record* to the model does not help explain any additional variance in dependent variable scores.

Hypothesis 3b posits that a positive relationship exists between *collective efficacy* and *sports record*. Tested using hierarchical linear modeling, results (see model 5 in Table 11) confirm this hypothesis, showing a significant and positive relationship between *sports record* and *collective efficacy* (B = 0.04, SE = 0.02, p = .02).

Turning to H3c, statistical analysis was undertaken using a hierarchical generalized linear model due to the non-normal distribution of the *civic engagement* data. As seen in model 5 of Table 12, *sports record* does not have a significant relationship with *civic engagement* (B = 0.00, SE = 0.00, p = .59), thus providing no evidence for H3c.

The association between *ICSN* and *sports record* (H3d) was the final test of H3. Again tested using hierarchical linear modeling, model 5 in Table 13 shows a marginally

significant positive relationship (*B* = 0.04, *SE* = 0.02, *p* = .09). Although in the anticipated direction, the lack of statistical significance yields no support for H3d.

H4: Volunteerism and donations

The fourth and final hypothesis posits that franchise success has a positive association with volunteerism (H4a) and the giving of charitable donations (H4b) in MSAs that have a major league sports franchise. Unlike the survey data, which provided a cross-sectional examination of sports' relationship on the dependent variables under investigation, the volunteerism and donation data span 12 years, from 2004 to 2015. Statistical analyses will again proceed using hierarchical linear modeling, with data clustered by MSA, but this time with repeated measures to account for differences by year (Seltman, 2018). Because of the non-linear nature of the volunteerism and donation data across the years, it is also possible to treat time as a random effect, and not as a repeated measure, in the H4 statistical analyses. I tested H4 both ways. The results reported in Table 14 treat time as a repeated measure. Using models with time as a random effect (not shown) does not change the significance (or lack thereof) of the H4 results reported in this chapter.

Table 14. Hierarchical Linear Models of Volunteerism and Donations

	Coefficient (SE)		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Mean volunteer rate	27.63 (0.78)***	27.72 (0.74)***	27.71 (0.74)***
MSA-level fixed effects			
Population		-0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)**
Unemployment		0.01 (0.06)	0.02 (0.06)
Median income		-0.00 (0.00)**	-0.00 (0.00)**
Sports record			-0.03 (0.01)**
Mean donations[a]	17.49 (0.10)***	17.52 (0.11)***	17.52 (0.11)***
MSA-level fixed effects			
Population		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Unemployment		-0.01 (0.00)*	-0.01 (0.00)*
Median income		0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Sports record			0.00 (0.00)

Note. All independent variables are grand-mean centered.
[a] *donations* is natural-log transformed due to its non-normal distribution.
* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Model 1 for volunteerism (the first half of Table 14) and Model 1 for donations (the second half of Table 14) show the intercept-only models. Wald Z tests (not shown) were conducted for each of the 12 years under investigation; results were always significant, indicating that *volunteer rate* and *donations* were different across MSAs each year. Model 2 for volunteerism and donations shows the control variables only, and Model 3 shows the results when *sports record* is added to the controls. *Sports record* has a significant negative relationship with *volunteer rate* (B = -0.03, SE = 0.01, p = .006), and a non-significant relationship with *donations* (B = 0.00, SE = 0.00, p = .60).

The findings disconfirm H4a and H4b. In fact, the findings show the opposite pattern than was proposed by H4a. In an MSA, the better a team's record, the lower the percentage of people volunteering, a finding that holds across 12 years of data.

Conclusion

When I asked my survey respondents in an open-ended survey question to share their thoughts on what, if anything, would happen if all professional sports teams left their area, a Washington, DC, resident answered, "I have no idea how it impacts anything, really." This sentiment was shared by several other respondents from MSAs across the country. A Milwaukee resident concluded, "On the balance, the presence of professional sports teams doesn't impact the area in any way that I can measure." Couched as a question, these statements and others like them ask, does a team mean anything substantive to its city and its city's residents? We know of the negligible impact on a city's bottom line, but beyond economists' grim reports, little quantitative work has been done to shed light on the influence that major league teams have on their surroundings. To the anonymous residents of DC, Milwaukee, and beyond, the results reported above (and summarized below in Table 15) not only show that non-economic factors can be measured, but that a team's presence and success are related to how people view and behave in their communities. Although several hypotheses were disconfirmed, those that were supported present major league sports teams as intriguing storytellers within their cities. The stronger a fan of the local team, the higher the scores on *civic participation*, *sense of belonging*, and *ICSN*, with fandom having a

stronger relationship for males than females for the latter two variables. *Collective efficacy* rose alongside franchise success, suggesting that teams may have an influence for good or ill, depending on their on-field fortunes. Yet the decline in volunteerism as team success rises hints that wins tallied in the sports pages may not always be a win for community needs. Major league teams, it appears, are not a one-size-fits-all boon or bane for a city and its residents. In Chapter 6, I will discuss in detail these findings and their implications.

Table 15. Summary of Findings

H1 (DV positively related to having a sports franchise in the MSA)
H1a *sense of belonging* – disconfirmed
H1b *collective efficacy* – disconfirmed
H1c *civic participation* – disconfirmed
H1d *ICSN* – disconfirmed
H2 (DV positively related to local fan strength)
H2a *sense of belonging* – confirmed (with gender interaction)
H2b *collective efficacy* – disconfirmed
H2c *civic participation* – confirmed
H2d *ICSN* – confirmed (with gender interaction)
H3 (DV positively related to franchise success)
H1a *sense of belonging* – disconfirmed
H1b *collective efficacy* – confirmed
H1c *civic participation* – disconfirmed
H1d *ICSN* – disconfirmed
H4 (DV positively related to franchise success)
H4a *volunteer rate* – disconfirmed (significant relationship in negative direction)
H4b *donations* – disconfirmed
RQ1 (gender)
For *sense of belonging* and *ICSN*, gender had a significant interaction effect with local fan strength, with the result being that males had stronger positively related outcomes than females.

Note. All dependent variables (DV) are shown in italics.

Chapter 5: Open End Response Results

My dissertation's purpose is to discover if major league sports teams act as storytelling organizations, and if so, what effect a team's presence has on city residents. In this pursuit, the previous chapter reported results from closed-ended survey questions. In this chapter, I share results from open-ended questions. Here, survey takers are presented in their own voices, telling stories about sports, teams, and their cities. Women and men, and people of all ages, share what professional sports mean to them, and they talk about how their metro area would change with a team's arrival or departure.

In analyzing survey takers' responses, several themes emerged that are not directly related to the independent and dependent variables investigated in the previous chapter, such as *money* and *entertainment*. Many of the themes, however, do speak – sometimes in broad terms and sometimes in very direct terms – to the ideas of connectedness that are at the heart of this dissertation. The survey takers link sports to creating community and bridging demographic divides. Teams, they say, give them something to talk about that helps build connections among those who would otherwise be strangers. As one 42-year-old female resident of New Orleans stated, "no matter race/creed/background, you can always find common ground talkin' bout dem Saints."

RQ2a: What do professional sports mean to you?

Of the 2,119 total survey participants used in my quantitative analyses, 1,524 (71.9%) left a response to the open-ended question: "What do professional sports mean to you?" (RQ2a).[81] This question was included to give survey participants an opportunity to express, in their own words, their feelings about professional sports.[82] The tone of the responses was mostly positive in nature,[83] while their sophistication varied: some participants gave simple, one-word answers: "a lot" (n = 6); "not much" (n = 21); "everything" (n = 10); "nothing" (n = 20), while others shared their feelings in much more depth. Upon reading and coding each of these comments, two overarching patterns emerged: people described professional sports as (a) an entertainment source and outlet from the stresses of everyday life (48.8%); and (b) something that connects people to a community, friends, and family (31.7%; see Figure 5). Descriptions of these patterns, along with examples, follow below.

Before focusing on these two patterns, it is worth noting that a number of participants saw the survey question as an invitation to share a dictionary definition of

[81] As discussed in the previous chapter, this question was not posed to those who replied "strongly disagree" to the statement, "I consider myself a sports fan" (n = 274).

[82] I asked about "professional sports" as opposed to "major league sports" because I did not fully consider the distinction between the two terms until after the survey was in the field. In this case, it may have been an advantage, as asking people to share what "major league" sports means to them may have led to some confusion regarding Major League Baseball, the only one of the big four sports that uses the term "major league" in its official name.

[83] The responses were coded for tone with the following results: positive, n = 830 (54.5% of responses); negative, n = 110 (5.2%); mixed, n = 74 (4.9%) and; neutral/could not determine, n = 510 (33.5%). The tone results are not emphasized for RQ2a owing to the what was described above in footnote 1.

professional sports.[84] Definitions, which encompassed (14.8%) of responses, generally included references to specific professional sports leagues as well as athletes who are paid to play and/or highly skilled at their sports. Examples of typical responses included: "Means being paid a lot of money to be professional and be exceptional at your game. You've spent years and most of your life perfecting said craft" (female, 35, Tampa); and "Anything where the athletes are paid. NFL, MLS, NBA & WNBA, NHL, MLB, etc." (male, 40, Portland). Responses coded as definitions were generally straightforward and mundane, rarely including additional commentary or insight (exceptions include this response: "individuals getting paid *way too much* money to play a sport," female, 31, Dallas, emphasis mine). For this reason, I include only these few examples of definitions before moving on to the more substantive RQ2a results.

Outlet and Entertainment

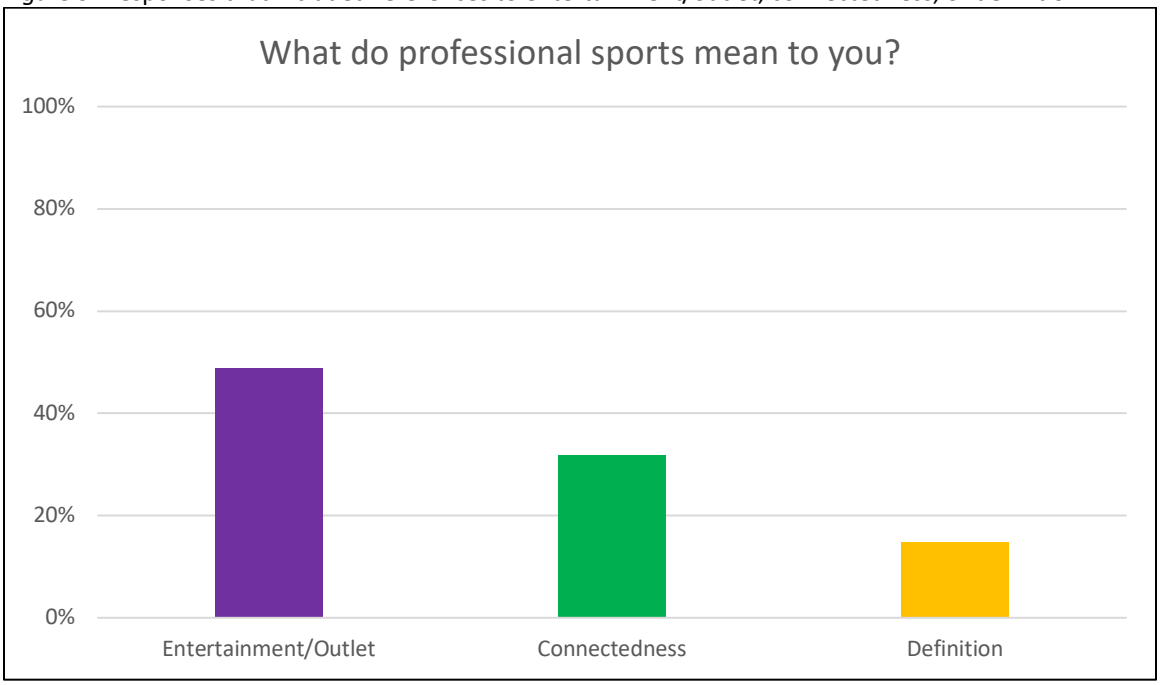
Participants commonly referred to sports as an *outlet* from the stresses of everyday life, as well as a source of *entertainment* (see Figure 6). Positive references to sports as an outlet suggested that sports provided a welcome respite from work and other serious responsibilities: "It's a way to forget about problems. It's a way to escape for just a few hours." (female, 43, Dallas); "A way to enjoy my time by watching something that isn't as serious as real life" (male, 34, Evansville); "They represent a

[84] Several participants noted in their responses that they were unsure if my question was asking for a specific definition or not: "Not sure what the question means. My definition is people who get paid (a lot) to play at a very high athletic level" (female, 63, Miami); and "Nothing? :) If someone wanted me to give a definition I would say I think this means NBA, NHL and not college though" (female, 29, Louisville).

chance to break away from the mundane and share sheer unadulterated joy with like-minded fans! Sports brings people together" (female, 58, San Francisco/Oakland); and "A way to escape and relax for an afternoon or evening, indulge in a few hot dogs and beers, and join in some therapeutic group yelling" (female, 41, San Francisco/Oakland).

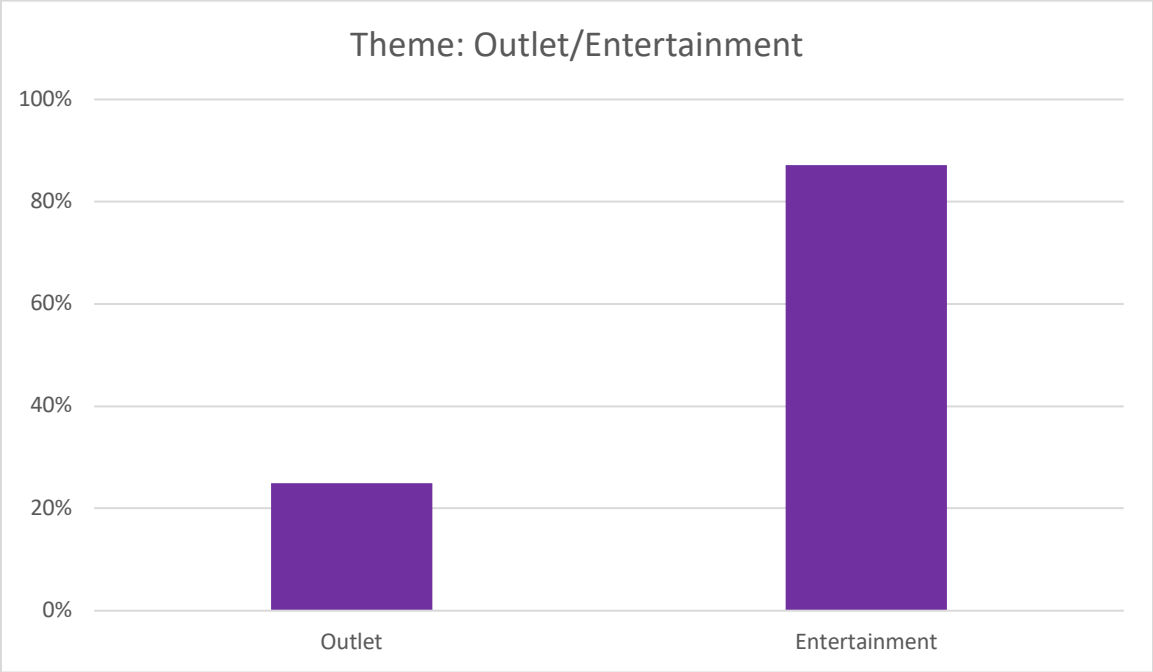
Less positive *outlet* references, while rare, suggested that professional sports were a distraction from more important matters. "Sports are an occasional distraction, but I don't really have the time or inclination to closely follow them like I did when I was younger" (male, 37, Portland); and "Very little on a serious level; they're simply a mindless sort of escapism to follow and fall into" (female, 31, Detroit).

Figure 5. Responses that included references to entertainment/outlet, connectedness, or definition



Note. Categories are not mutually exclusive; a response could include, for example, a reference to entertainment/outlet and connectedness.

Figure 6. Responses within the outlet/entertainment theme



Note. Categories are not mutually exclusive; a response could be coded as outlet, entertainment, or both.

Whether positive or negative, *outlet* references suggested that following sports is not an endeavor to be taken seriously. For those whose comments were positive, however, the time spent with the less-serious sports was a welcome respite from everyday life, whereas the few negative comments suggested that time spent with sports was a hollow distraction from more pressing matters.

A large number of responses referenced professional sports as *entertainment*, and many of these comments were only one or a few words that gave no indication of the participant's personal feelings – positive or negative – about sports: "entertainment" was the one-word response from 70 participants; "it's a form of entertainment" (male, 42, Detroit) was typical of the neutral responses. Other

participants were more enthusiastic about sports' entertainment role, with words like "fun," "exciting," and "enjoyable" frequently peppering entertainment-related comments. "It's the best form of entertainment" (male, 25, San Francisco/Oakland) was characteristic of some of the more positive comments related to entertainment. On the other hand, there were responses that described sports in more moderate, if not indifferent, tones: "Professional sports are fun to watch but I would not be sad if they did not exist" (female, 24, Raleigh); "Occasional entertainment" (female, 52, Salt Lake City); and "Not that much. I'm not a big sports fan. It's just a kind of entertainment" (male, 47, Washington DC).

Although the straightforward references to sports as entertainment were plentiful, participants often augmented such comments with acknowledgements that sports were more than just an escape or a few fun hours in front of the television. "They are a form of entertainment *and* a way for my community to come together and connect over something we enjoy and can stand behind" (female, 26, Charlotte, emphasis mine). "It's entertaining *and* it makes you feel like you are a part of something" (female, 32, Philadelphia, emphasis mine). "Great escape and entertainment *and* sense of belonging" (male, 48, Indianapolis). Indeed, the majority of comments that referenced sports as an outlet or entertainment also included a reference to sports as bringing community, friends, or family together. "Something to root for, to bring a community together and unite for a common cause. It's also entertainment, but really it's about much more than that" (male, 22, Boston). Their

responses describe sports as an object of both unserious amusement *and* meaningful community and personal value.

Connectedness

The second main pattern observed in the responses revolves around the idea of connectedness: connectedness to the community, to friends, and to family (see Figure 7). It is a sense that sports help people feel like they belong to something bigger than themselves. Community, friends, and family are discussed in turn below.

Community connectedness is a theme revolving around professional sports bringing the city and its residents together. Some of the responses speak of this broadly, simply stating that sports, "brings the city together…" (female, 30, Cleveland). Several participants simply left the single-word response, "community" (female, 32, Birmingham; female, 43, Seattle; and male, 55, Denver).

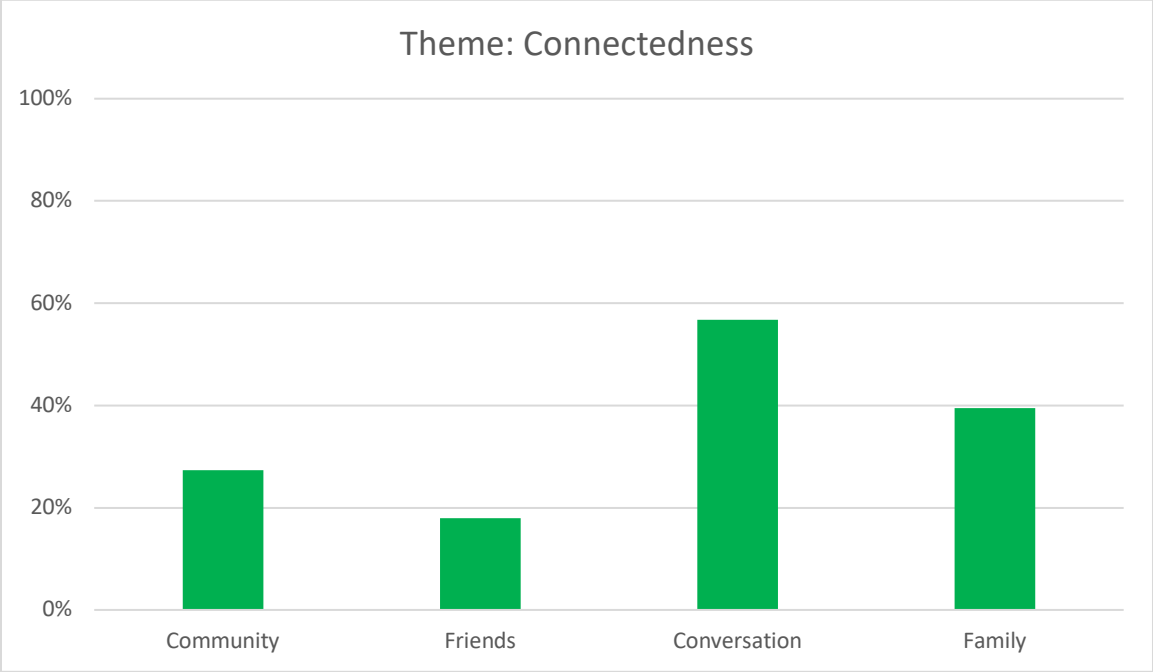
Others are more illustrative in their descriptions of connectedness:

> It's something that you have in common with other people in the city: from different neighborhoods, working different jobs, etc. If you meet people around, you can talk about the O's [Orioles] or Ravens (I prefer the O's). Also, when traveling, I like to wear an O's cap as a conversation starter. I have met people with Baltimore connections all over the country that way. (male, 35, Baltimore)

Other examples of comments indicative of community connectedness include: "A form of entertainment that can be viewed live or on TV. Also a way to unite people in a large metro city" (female, 43, Portland); and "It's something that can unite people, a city,

together...in our city, it's people's shared love for the Cavs and Indians and shared perpetual disappointment in the Browns...” (female, 43, Cleveland).

Figure 7. Responses within the connectedness theme



Note. Categories are not mutually exclusive; a response could be coded as more than one of these categories.

Some responses suggested that sports’ ability to connect others was more meaningful to fans of a particular team: “A way to bring the city together cheering on home team and having fun with friends” (male, 30, Orlando); and “They are wonderful for bringing the community together. No matter what your individual athletic ability is, you can share a common thread through being spectators together, all cheering for the same wins and supporting each other through losses” (female, 28, Boston). Others, however, specifically noted that sports can lead to a connectedness that is broader than

partisans cheering for the same team. “They are a way to unite members of a population, not always from the same city” (male, 25, Nashville); and “They bring people together even when you aren't rooting for the same team” (female, 23, Las Vegas). In other words, sports in general, and not just fandom of a particular team, can provide a common bond that acts as a vehicle for connectedness.

In a related vein, sports was mentioned as a means to connect with friends and others, especially through sports-related conversations (as discussed in Chapter 2, see e.g., Walsh, 2004): “Watching them on tv, going to games, talking about them with friends and family, participating in fantasy football, and going out to sports bars and watching the game” (female, 28, Denver); and “Since everyone is from somewhere else, we all bond over sports. Most talk about the college team sports, but any sports is good to talk about” (female, 54, Raleigh). Several responses specifically described sports as an aid in getting to know others: “A good form of entertainment. Also, a good topic of conversation to use as an ice breaker when needed” (male, 55, Denver); and “A diverting way to spend a Sunday afternoon and an ice breaker topic with other Charlotteans” (male, 35, Charlotte). More than just a conversational lubricant, sports can also serve as something positive to talk about in the midst of negativity: “Professional sports in my neighborhood is a way others in the community can come together and bond over something positive, instead of always talking about the violence

and the negative aspect of our city" (female, 19, Miami).[85] Even for those who do not feel an affinity for sports, it can still be a vehicle used to connect with others: "Not much. I use it as a way of socializing with other people" (female, 32, Hartford).

Connectedness to family was a particularly strong theme amongst participants, and three sub-themes arose as I read responses. First, participants mentioned that sports serve as a current bonding element for their immediate family, particularly as it relates to temporal togetherness from watching games together (televised or in person). "A weekend pastime where the family can hang out together," (male, 54, Miami) was a common response. Other exemplars include: "I have four boys. All of whom play youth sports. Professional sports is a way for everyone in my family to connect. We watch sports in person or on TV, discuss sports... it brings us together" (female, 36, Pittsburgh); and "They mean entertainment, and bring the family together to watch, so I guess they mean family to me. Ha, never really thought about that" (male, 34, Las Vegas).

Even for survey participants who did not express a fondness for sports, watching and attending games can still serve as family-bonding element: "For me, it is a good way to spend some time with my 19-year old son as he is the real Jazz fan in the house.

[85] This comment came from a survey taker who took more than one of my Florida-based surveys, and so she is not included in the statistical analysis or percentage calculations in this dissertation. I felt her words, however, were worth including in this chapter. This is the only comment in my dissertation from someone that was excluded from my quantitative analyses.

That's primarily why I go to the game with him" (male, 45, Salt Lake City); and "Not a lot. I enjoy sharing it with my son" (male, 55, Rochester).

A second way that sports related to family was seen as participants described sports as a bridge to family traditions and experiences of the past: "Happy childhood memories of watching sports with my mom and going to events with her and my family members. Community, relaxation, and an outlet for stress relief" (female, 37, Richmond); "They remind me of when I played sports as a kid, watching them with family growing up. It's a lot about family for me. I come from an athletic family, even though I myself am an artist" (male, 26, Detroit); "I love watching sports. It reminds me of weekends spent watching football with my dad growing up. It was really the only time we spent together" (female, 38, Grand Rapids); and

> "Pro sports, especially Seahawks football, have always been important to my family. I grew up in the Seattle area and was raised with my dad's brothers and my mother's family coming over every time the hawks played to eat chili cheese dip and watch the games. I was an infant with a Seahawks jacket and I loved learning about all the rules of football and learning player names and positions as I got older. Football is less of a sport in my family and more of a time-honored tradition." (female, 34, Seattle)

Third, participants described teams, and the communities they create, as a family: "Professional sports give me a sense of pride and belonging to my community and city. When I go to a Ravens game and cheer for my team, I feel like at home as if we

were like a big family" (female, 33, Baltimore); "Entertainment and community is what being a professional sports team fan in Pittsburgh [sic]. We are like a family and we love our teams win or lose" (female, 43, Pittsburgh); "It is more than a sport it is a community. Sports especially the bills have a great community. It makes you feel like you are a part of a giant family…" (female, 28, Buffalo); and "The Sabres and the Bills have always been another member of our family. When they do good we do good. When they do bad, we are there with them still" (male, 27, Buffalo). From their descriptions, participants position sports as an entity that creates, continues, and strengthens family, and family-type, bonds.

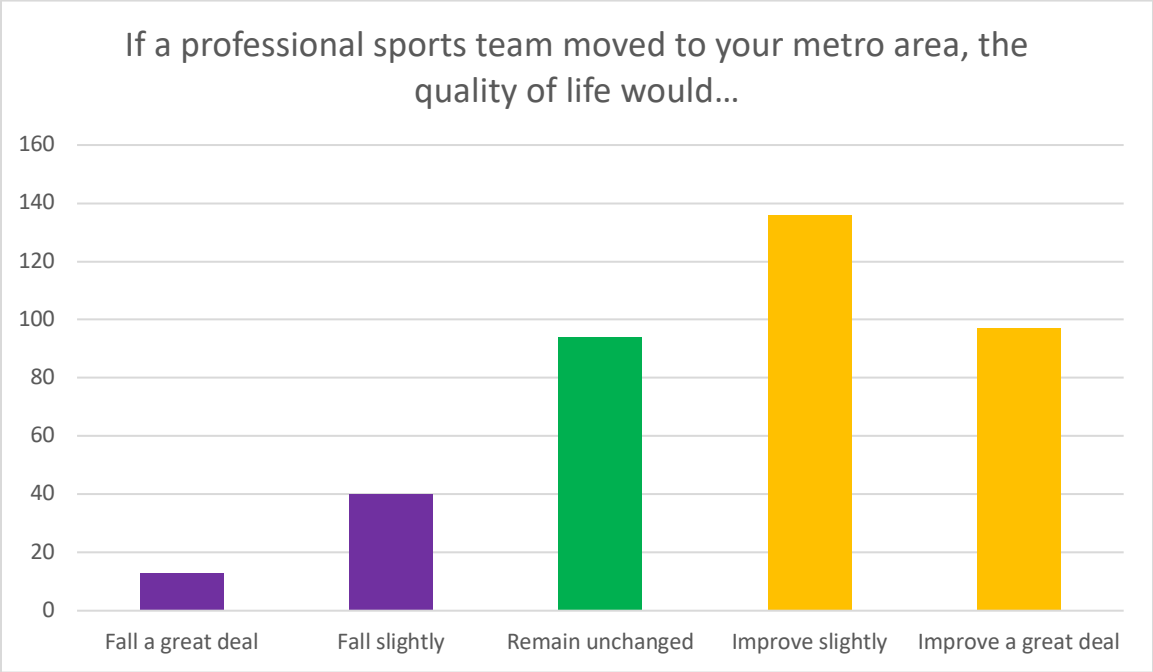
In summary, when participants were asked "what do professional sports mean to you?" they gave responses ranging from simple descriptions of fun and entertainment to evocative depictions of community, friends, and family. The majority of responses cast sports in a positive light, a benefit to a city and its residents. And even participants for whom it meant "not much," sports was still often described alongside some redeeming quality, including its ability to help people socialize with others and build bonds with family members. From the participants' perspectives, sports means both entertainment and connectedness, frivolity and substance. How the themes and responses described above fit into the storytelling scope and wider conclusions of my dissertation will be discussed in the next chapter. Before then, the next section of this chapter will explore what survey participants had to say about the impact that teams have on the quality of life in their cities.

RQ2b: Gaining a sports team and quality of life

All participants living in metropolitan areas without a team in one of the four major sports leagues were asked two questions about how the arrival of a major league team could affect the quality of life in their area. The first question was closed-ended and asked participants to select between a range of five response options indicating that the quality of life would "fall a great deal" to "improve a great deal." Figure 8 shows that the majority of participants in non-sports cities felt that gaining a team would improve the quality of life in their metro area. The second question was open-ended, and asked participants to explain their reasoning for their response to the previous close-ended question. All respondents from the 13 metro areas without sports teams (n = 388) saw these two questions, and 380 respondents (97.9%) left a response.

Upon reading and pondering over all 380 open-ended responses, six themes emerged: *money*, *connectedness*, *traffic*, *crime*, *not my city*, and *not a fan*. These themes were introduced in the methodology chapter, and will be discussed in more detail below. Please note that these six themes are not mutually exclusive; a respondent's comment could, and often did, mention one or more of these themes.

Figure 8. Number of responses to the close-ended quality of life question



Comments are reported here in a different manner than the previous section. Results for the "what do sports mean to you" section were broken down by different comment themes (e.g., connectedness and outlet/entertainment). In this section, I sort the comments based on how the participants responded to the "quality of life" question, grouping the results by those who said the arrival of a sports team would make the quality of life (a) fall, (b) remain unchanged, or (c) improve. As will be seen, there are similarities and distinctions among these three groups, and a summary table of results for RQ2b and RQ2c is included at the end of this chapter for reference (see Table 16). Those who think quality of life would fall refer to money, traffic, and crime. Participants who believe a sports team would not change the quality of life discuss

money and about how their city is not a good fit for a team. Finally, those who think a team will improve the quality of life refer to the economic benefits and the ability teams have to bring people together.

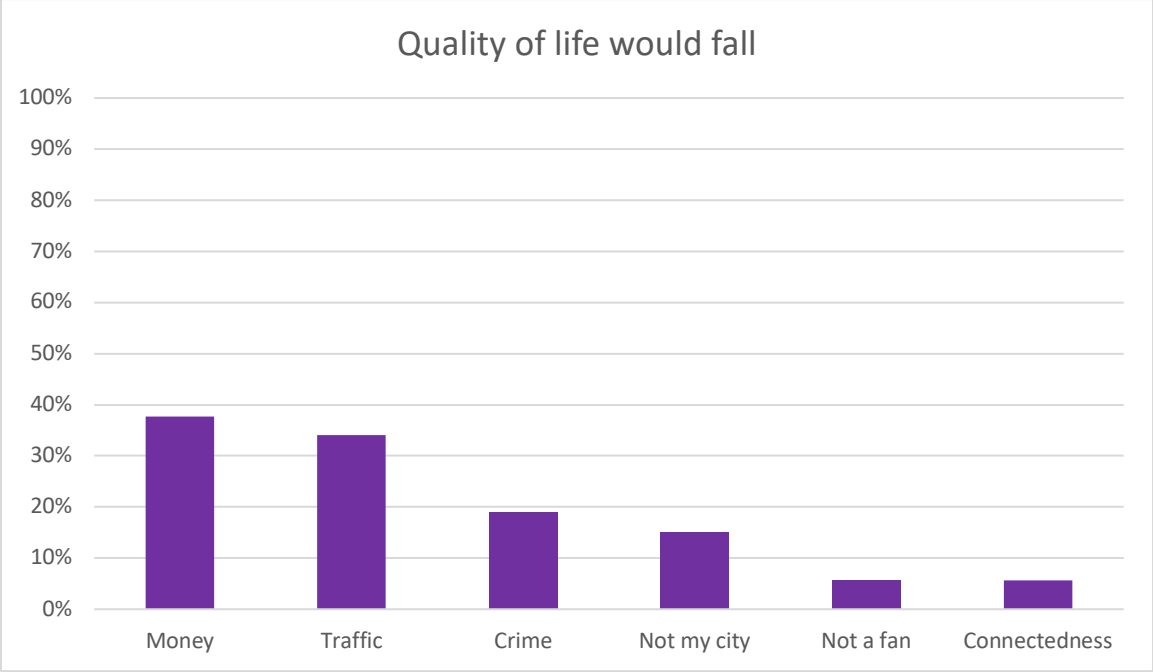
Quality of life will fall

Those indicating that quality of life would fall a great deal (n = 13) or fall slightly (n = 40) supported their opinions most frequently by citing the themes of *money* (37.7%) and *traffic* (34.0%; see Figure 9). *Crime* (18.9%) and *not my city* (15.1%) were followed by *not a fan* (5.7%) and *connectedness*[86] (5.7%).

Typical *money*-related responses noted that a team's presence would either divert limited public funds away from more pressing community needs or have a negative impact on the cost of living. "Birmingham needs to focus on repairing it's roads and education system before buying into the big business of professional sports, potentially putting us into further debt" (female, 25, Birmingham); and "Due to taxes, rents and property tax will go up for the families living in Riverside making it harder to make payments" (male, 25, Riverside).

[86] Only three comments related to connectedness were left by those indicating that quality of life would fall. In spite of stating that quality of life would fall at the arrival of a team, two of these three comments said that sports teams would improve community connectedness. The third connectedness comment, which is negative in nature, is highlighted below.

Figure 9. For those indicating quality of life would fall, this is the percent of comments mentioning one of the six themes



An increase in *traffic* was the other most frequently cited reason for a potential decrease in quality of life. Responses related to *traffic* generally mentioned money as well:

> It would make traffic worse, as if that's even POSSIBLE at this point. Rent would go up, and real estate. We'd turn into San Francisco, and not in a good way – an expensive way. Epic FAIL. The city was built to accommodate 250K people, max. We can't do anymore. (female, 52, Austin).

The following response from a 32-year-old male from South Bend cites not only *money* and *traffic*, but is one of the very few responses to indicate that the presence of a sports team (in this case Notre Dame college football) harms community *connectedness*:

The presence of Notre Dame in our community and its regard among fans of college

> football has already created conditions by which substantial public resources are devoted to sustaining the university's football program, to the detriment of the surrounding community. It generates a great deal of traffic (mostly tourist traffic) which has (among other things) funneled infrastructure spending toward roads (which are then under capacity for most of the year), and away from public transit and neighborhood development. It's also disrupted the landscape of the local economy, and the cohesiveness of local communities. A professional sports team would exponentially amplify this problem. South Bend would become a great place for sports fans all across the country to visit... just a terrible place for existing residents to live.

Participants also referenced the themes of *crime* and *not my city* as reasons for a decline in quality of life. *Crime*-related comments typically cited criminal activity, drunkenness, and rowdy behavior from locals and tourists: “I think it might attract rowdy fans, garbage and noise” (female, 40, Grand Rapids); and:

> We have weird roads here, almost none go straight, this causes traffic congestion. A big team here would make it much much worse. Also it would bring in more people from out of the area and thus crime would increase. (male, 56, Riverside).

Not my city references spoke to the idea that the city was either too small or had a culture that would be harmed by the arrival of a sports team: “I love Rochester for its warm, hip, artsy vibes. That's just begging for more commercialization and traffic and frat bros” (female, 23, Rochester).

Because of the relative infrequency with which *not a fan* and *connectedness* were referenced, they will not be addressed in relation to the group who said quality of life would fall. This will be the same pattern for the sections below; themes will be addressed in detail only when they have been mentioned by more than 10% of participants in a particular group.

Quality of life will remain unchanged

Ninety-four participants responded that the arrival of a major league team would not affect the quality of life in their metro area, and when asked to explain why, the most frequently cited themes were *not my city* (30.9%) and *money* (28.7%; see Figure 10). The other themes were mentioned less frequently: *not a fan* (14.9%), *traffic* (7.4%), *crime* (5.3%), and *connectedness* (1.1%). Of note, unlike those participants who said quality of life would either fall or improve, those who said it would remain unchanged frequently offered both negative and positive reasons for their conclusions (e.g., “Increase of income, increase of crime. It levels out to be the same it is now, “female, 34, Birmingham); they seemed to think of competing consequences of a team’s arrival.

The *not my city* theme centers on the idea that the city and its residents are not well-suited to support a major league sports team. This idea is expressed in sentiments that describe: (a) the city as already having a college or minor league team with fans unwilling to support a new team; (b) the city as already having a well-established non-sports culture, and the addition of a major league sports team would not alter that culture enough to change the quality of life; and (c) the city as too small to support a major league team. A typical response citing a city's pre-existing sports loyalties includes: "There is already enough going on with the college ball games and the (semi-pro?) baseball team here, so as people are creatures of habit, I don't think much would happen one way or the other...just my opinion" (female, 64, Louisville). A comment emblematic of the notion that a city already has a pre-existing culture, includes: "Austin's focus is more on live music and quality food and beverage, more than professional sports. Bringing in more professional sports would not change much the existing culture and atmosphere" (male, 39, Austin). Finally, responses suggesting that the city is too small include this one:

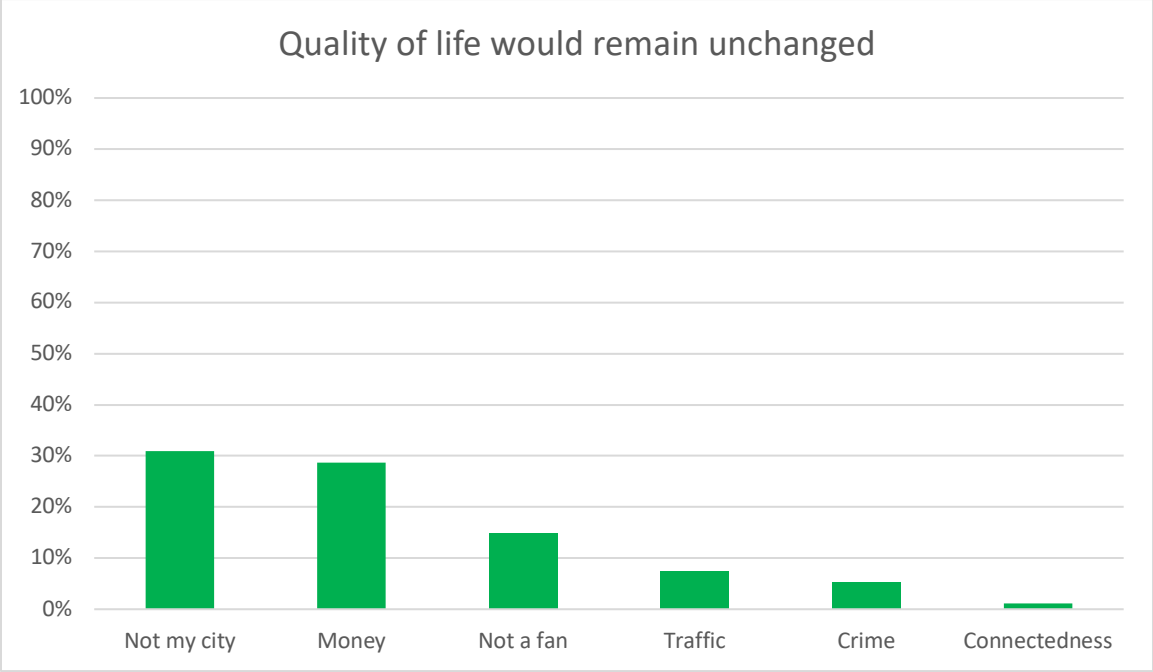
> I don't see a major team moving here, maybe a farm team. Richmond has never been viewed as being a large enough market. While a sports team might bring some local economic boost, it would also be at some level of taxpayer expense. The counties don't usually work well with the city. Small businesses such as restaurants are booming in this area as it is." (male, 49, Richmond)

Money was another common theme among participants who said gaining a team would not change their metro area's quality of life. A typical refrain was that any financial benefits (often described as an increase in local jobs) would be negated by public expenditures:

> I think they'd convince the city to spend money on a stadium, which the city can't afford. There might be more services cut as a result. I don't think construction jobs would last long enough, I don't think there would be enough extra business drawn into the city as a result of the team to create a large number of lasting jobs. I think any jobs created would be offset by money spent by the city. (female, 49, Hartford).

Not a fan comments revolved around participants who said they were not enough of a sports fan to either care about or know how a team's arrival would affect their city. Typical responses included: "I don't care about sports therefore there would be no change for me" (female, 32, Birmingham); and "I'm not sure it would change much, but I am not a sports person so I do not really have an educated opinion on how life would change in Grand Rapids if that actually happened" (female, 32, Grand Rapids).

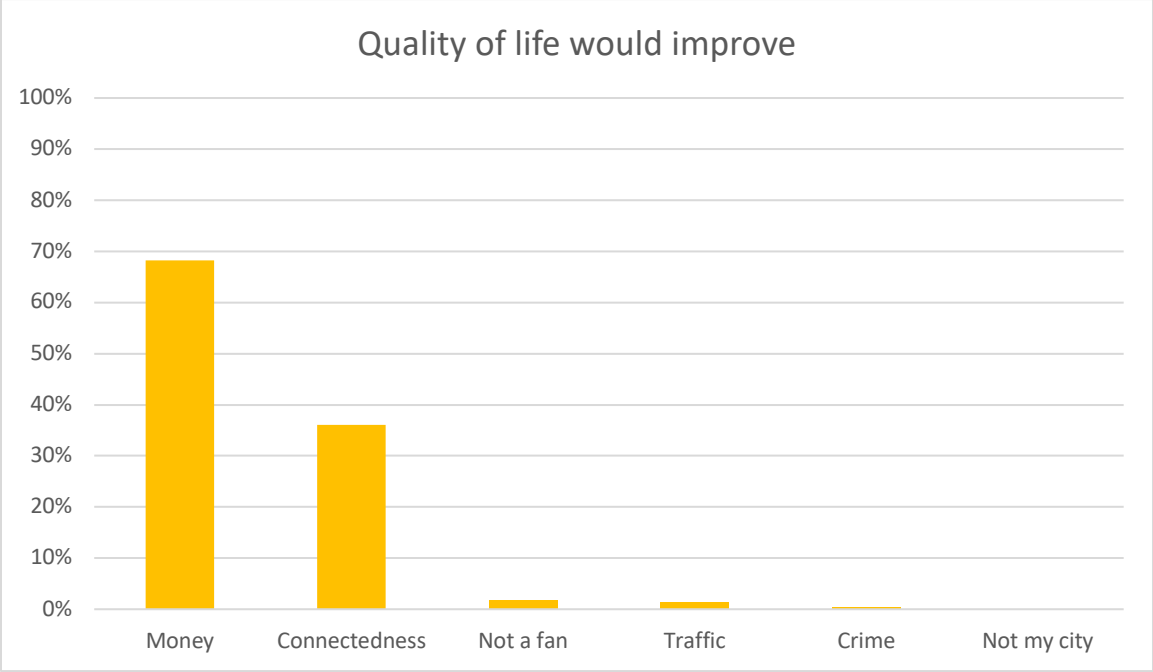
Figure 10. For those indicating quality of life would remain unchanged, this is the percent of comments mentioning one of the six themes



Quality of life would improve

The majority of participants responded that gaining a sports team would slightly improve (n = 136) or greatly improve (n = 97) the quality of life in their metro area. The two themes of note were *money* (68.2%) and *connectedness* (36.1%), with the other four themes being mentioned far less often or not at all: *not a fan* (1.7%); *traffic* (1.3%); *crime* (< 1.0%); and *not my city* (< 1.0%; see Figure 11).

Figure 11. For those indicating quality of life would improve, this is the percent of comments mentioning one of the six themes



Comments related to *money* referred to local economic benefits, especially those related to revenues brought in by tourists. Typical responses included: "It would attract more people to come into Providence which would be good for the local economy" (female, 55, Providence); "More money spent locally. Improved real estate values. More jobs" (male, 45, Grand Rapids); "I think the quality of life would improve because the sports team would draw in more people to Tucson and boost the economy" (male, 25, Tucson); and "More people would come to see the team and that means more local business would succeed" (female, 31, Virginia Beach).

Money-related comments also contained references to the *connectedness*. Typical comments included these examples: "Professional teams bring jobs, help

improve the economy, and bring people of different backgrounds together to support the team" (male, 35, Rochester); "It would give something the whole city can root for, and bring money to the city" (male, 30, Rochester); and:

> I think it would improve the economy because people would have more jobs and it would give people something else to do. We are a large city but even though I am not a sports fan it would be fun to buy tickets and go to an event once in a while just to have something else to do and have someone to cheer for. (female, 29, Louisville)

Of note, Hartford was at one time home to major league sports with their NHL hockey team, the Hartford Whalers.[87] Several Hartford residents referenced the economic and community benefits Hartford had when they were a major league city: "Because I remember what it was like when the Whalers were here. There seemed to be a lot of camaraderie and economic benefits" (female, 60, Hartford); and "It would bring jobs, tourists spending money and would uplift Hartford just like it did when the Hartford Whalers were here" (female, 43, Hartford).

Although *money* and *connectedness* were often mentioned together, 19.7% of comments (n = 46) made by those citing an improvement in quality of life referred to *connectedness* without a reference to *money*. These comments suggested that the presence of a major league sports team would provide something around which a

[87] The Hartford Whalers were in the NHL from 1979-1997. At the conclusion of the 1996-1997 season, the Whalers relocated to Raleigh, North Carolina, and were renamed the Carolina Hurricanes.

diverse population could build common ground: “So many people from all different walks of life love sports. Even though I am not a big fan of sports I do like how they can bring people together and help you find similarities where you would normally see none” (female, 32, Providence); “I believe that it would be the reason a lot of people would come together for a different purpose. It would bring unlikely personalities together as a neutral way of getting to know each other” (female, 30, Rochester); “I think it would help band more people together. We are a community of immigrants for the most part” (female, 25, Austin); and “Because it would have the people in my neighborhood finally agreeing on something and give us something to look forward to” (male, 26, Birmingham).

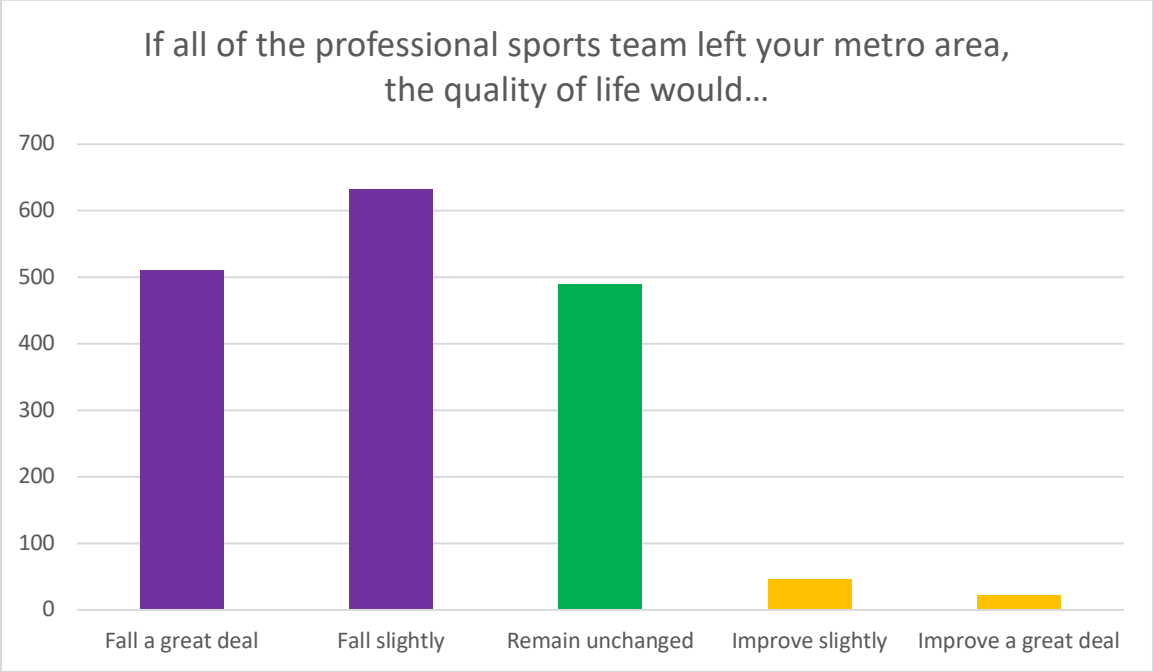
In summary, *money* is clearly a key consideration when it comes to thinking about quality of life in one’s area; the majority of participants (54.2%) referenced *money* in their comments. Beyond economics, however, the results show that people view a sports team’s connection to quality of life in different ways. For those who thought it would fall or remain unchanged, quality of life was about safety, a smooth commute, and maintaining a city’s particular culture. Sports teams were seen as a hinderance or inconsequential to these notions. For those who thought it would improve, quality of life was focused on making connections with others, and only for this group would the arrival of a sports team be a benefit. These results will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Below, this chapter will conclude with a final section focused on

participants living in major league cities and how they would feel about the quality of life if all of their cities' teams moved away.

RQ2c: Losing sports teams and quality of life

All participants (n = 1,731) living in cities with professional sports teams were asked a close-ended question about how the quality of life in their metro area would be affected if all of the professional sports teams in their metro area left. Figure 12 shows that the majority of participants felt that a team's departure would have a negative impact on the quality of life. Participants were then asked in an open-ended follow-up question to explain why they felt the quality of life would change or remain unchanged. Responses to this open-ended question were left by 98.2% of participants (n = 1,699).

Figure 12. Number of responses to the close-ended quality of life question



Upon analyzing all responses, eight distinct themes emerged: *identity*, *money*, *connectedness*, *entertainment*, *not a fan*, *not sports*, *crime*, and *traffic*. As done previously, these themes will be reported in the context of those who said the quality of life would fall, remain unchanged, or improve. Those who think quality of life would fall tend to refer to the four themes of *identity*, *money*, *connectedness*, and *entertainment*. For participants who felt that the quality of life would remain unchanged, their comments centered on the five themes of *not sports*, *entertainment*, *identity*, *not a fan*, and *money*. For the relatively few participants who said that a team's departure would lead to an improvement in quality of life, comments focused on the three themes of *money*, *traffic*, and *crime*. As reminders, not all themes are reported for each group, and the eight themes are not mutually exclusive; one comment may contain multiple themes.

Quality of life will fall

Participants who responded that quality of life would fall a great deal (n = 510) or fall slightly (n = 632) referenced themes of *identity* (50.4% of total comments), *money* (34.5%), *connectedness* (25.7%), and *entertainment* (15.4%; see Figure 13). Other themes mentioned less frequently, and not discussed in detail in this section, are *not a fan* (3.9%), *not sports* (2.2%), *crime* (0.9%), and *traffic* (0.01%).

For those who said that quality of life would fall, *identity* focused on the idea that a city and its residents gain a sense of identity from their local major league sports teams. Losing those team would, in turn, equate to excising a key element of how

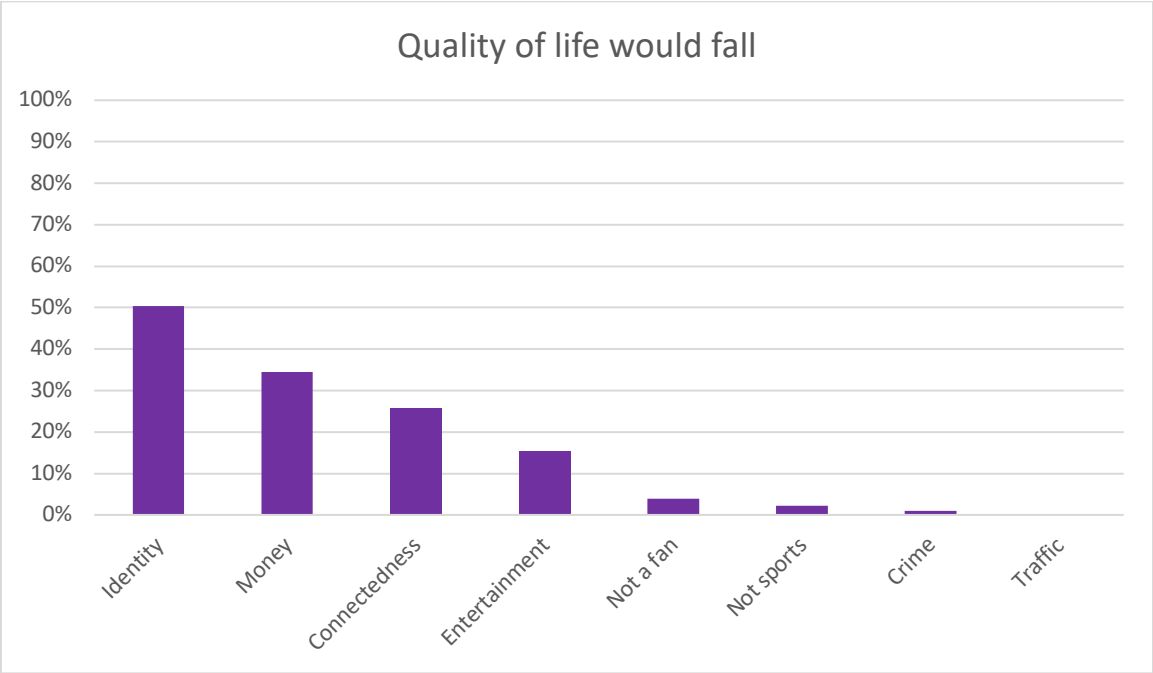
people identify themselves and their city. “It's Pittsburgh's identity. Without these teams, we would lose ourselves” (male, 45, Pittsburgh) is a succinct comment representative of many others that suggested losing the teams would diminish the quality of life. Another participant put it this way: “There would be less excitement and New York would be, less New York. Sports is one of the things that makes NYC, NYC (female, 22, New York City). These sentiments were also shared by some who indicated that they were not sports fans: “They are part of our identity, and having them all leave would hurt a lot of sports fans, in my opinion. I'm not even a huge sports fan and would be sad” (female, 25, Seattle); and

> Sports are very important to the entire area. People wear branded clothing all the time and it is important to who they are. When the Rams left, it really upset people. I don't even like sports, but the city doesn't feel as big or important without the Rams. So, losing all of the teams would be pretty devastating. It is what St. Louis is. (female, 35, St. Louis)

This last comment alludes to another aspect of *identity*, namely that a team’s presence lends gravitas to a city, elevating its identity above other cities that do not have major league teams. Hence, if the teams left, the reputation of the city would decline: “People seem to enjoy the Jazz and RSL and think they represent the state well on the national stage. I think people would feel like SLC is a minor league town if they left” (male, 34, Salt Lake City); and “We live breathe eat and drink Thunder. It has put us

on the map so to say. We love them. They are like a family here" (female, 25, Oklahoma City).

Figure 13. For those indicating quality of life would fall, this is the percent of comments mentioning one of the eight themes



Finally, some *identity* comments suggested that a team's identity reflected the character of the city's populace: "I think that the Bills mean a lot to Buffalo. They are very similar to Buffalo. Blue-collar, and hard-working" (male, 28, Buffalo); and

> It would be devastating to Memphis if the Grizzlies left. When the new owner came a couple of years ago, that was everyone's worst fear – that he would move the team. I feel like the community rallies around the Grizzlies. It is a big

source of pride for us and the team really represents our citizens – Grit and Grind! (female, 42, Memphis)

Money references suggest that a team's departure would have a negative effect on a city's economic well-being. Typical examples include: "The sports teams bring in a lot of revenue and have helped revitalize Downtown Detroit. Not having the teams would hurt the local economy and drive down the amount of foot traffic" (female, 42, Detroit); and "We have a lot of out-of-towners that come to see our sports teams. Without the teams, our hotel and restaurant business would be hurt. Other tourist attractions would also lose business" (male, 66, Chicago).

Comments related to the *connectedness* theme suggested that a team provides a way of creating relationships and commonality among a city's residents: "Sports are something many otherwise very different people can bond over" (male, 51, Seattle); "New Orleans Saints is the heart of the city. Without them there would be nothing to bring our great city together" (female, 32, New Orleans); and

This is a city which takes its sports teams very seriously. It seems to be one of a very few things that people from the city and the Detroit suburbs can rally around without paying attention to class, race, or identity. (male, 33, Detroit)

Of note, participants felt that teams did not have to be good in order to foster bonds among residents: "Sports in Buffalo has a way of uniting people across communities. Sundays in Buffalo are a time where most people unite to root on the Bills which is interesting because they have been terrible/mediocre for so long that you

would think people would lose interest" (female, 32, Buffalo); and "Granted the lions have always been awful it really means quite a bit to the people of the Detroit area that we have professional sports. Not a day goes by where I don't have a conversation about one of the teams we have" (male, 32, Detroit).

Further, participants referred to the local sports team as being one of the few, if not only, positive things that connect residents to one another: "The sports teams here in Charlotte bring many different communities together. Without this link, many people may not interact in a joyous way in the city" (female, 28, Charlotte); "Boston has phenomenal sports teams and the cold and crusty residents need something to get us on the same page. If we lost the sports teams we'd only be left with shared complaints, not shared joys and successes" (female, 28, Boston); and

> All the sports teams pretty much HAVE left SF/Oakland. The 49ers play in San Jose, the Raiders are moving to Las Vegas. The Warriors are moving to SF (boo hoo) and the A's still play in the broken-down Coliseum for now. I think that sports bring communities together and Oakland still has quite a few problems – gentrification, etc. Cheering for the Warriors last season REALLY helped bring us together as few other POSITIVE things would. (We always come together with earthquakes, fires and other natural disasters). (female, 58, San Francisco/Oakland)

Sports teams were also noted as transcending common political divides: "Sports, unlike politics, unite people; the teams are great for entertainment, fun, local pride and

businesses" (male, 46, Boston); and "Washington is a politically divided city. The sports teams are a place where people can go and have something in common" (male, 55, Washington DC).

The final point of emphasis related to *connectedness* was that participants felt that a team's presence helped precipitate conversations that would not happen in a team's absence.

"If people did not have the teams to talk about, they might never talk at all because the culture is so diverse. People are caught up in their own little petty lives" (female, 71, Miami); "People in Pittsburgh rally around the pro sports teams. You can talk to pretty much anyone about the Steelers, and most people about the Pirates or Penguins" (male, 32, Pittsburgh); "A sports team tends to make a loose common bond between all citizens in a city/metropolitan area even if that person claims to not be a sports fan. Sports teams have an effect on everything from jobs to just having something to chat about while standing in line at the grocery store" (female, 45, St. Louis); and "It brings Memphians together. They are as easy to talk about with a stranger as it is to talk about weather" (male, 34, Memphis).

Entertainment was another theme mentioned by those who said the quality of life would fall and it refers to there being less to do if teams left a metro area. "There would be no major source of entertainment, people wouldn't have something to look forward to, feel a connection to players, and cheer for their sporting team" (female, 37, Oklahoma City); "There would definitely be an entertainment void to fill. If 'America's

Team' left Dallas, I could see there being a dip in local pride" (male, 28, Dallas); and "Because the turnouts for the games are huge and many people wouldn't enjoy living in the area or coming from surrounding areas if the sports weren't here and many people [would be] left without a hobby or favorite pass time" (female, 19, Milwaukee).

Quality of life will remain unchanged

Five themes were paramount among the 489 participants who felt that quality of life would remain unchanged: *not sports* (42.7%), *entertainment* (21.1%), *identity* (17.6%), *not a fan* (14.7%), and *money* (12.7%; see Figure 14). The remaining three themes – *connectedness* (3.7%), *traffic* (2.0%), and *crime* (1.6%) – were mentioned less frequently and will not be discussed in this section.

The *not sports* theme refers to comments that stated that quality of life is not tied to sports or sports teams: "It's just sports. It's not important enough to make a significant change" (female, 24, Baltimore); "People overstate its importance, period. The deep and rather long history of pro sports fools some people into thinking that it is inconceivable to live without." (male, 61, Cleveland); and "For me the quality of life depends on good public transportation, cultural events, good community centers, community gardens and so on, none of which would be affected by sports at all" (female, 78, Sacramento).

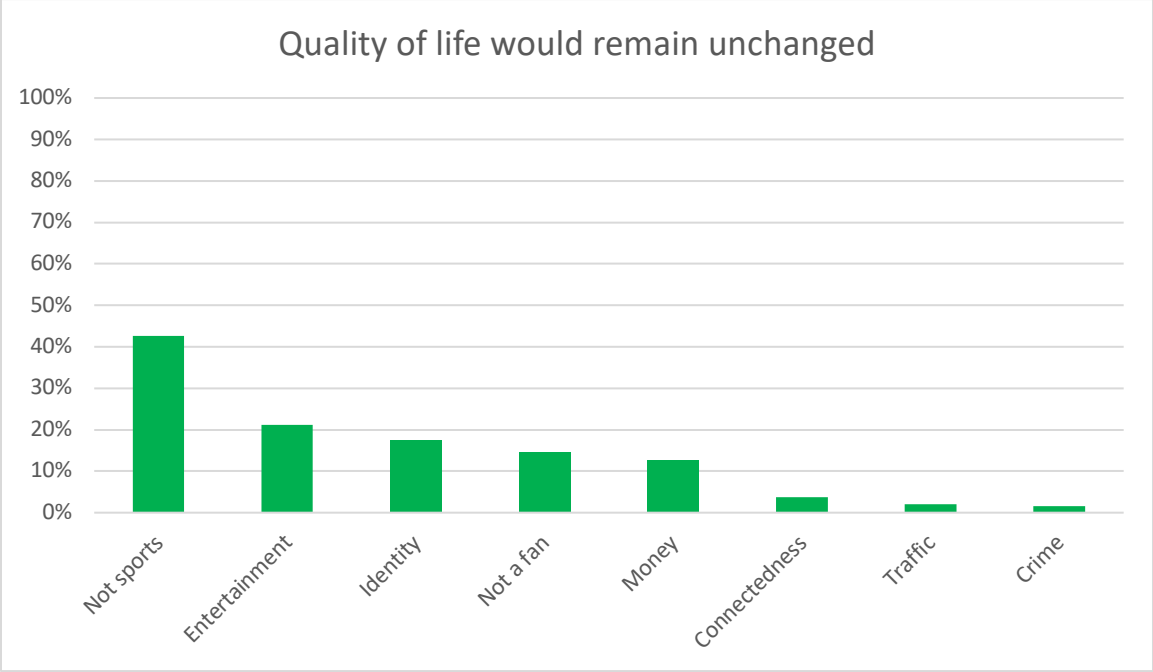
Additionally, in metro areas that had lost a team (e.g., San Diego, St. Louis, Cleveland), recently gained a team (e.g., Oklahoma City), or were about to gain a team (e.g., Las Vegas), some participants noted that the change did not affect the quality of

life: “The Chargers already left and it didn't really change. I know very few people who attend Padres’ games therefore it isn't a big part of people’s lives in SD. We have beaches and pools instead” (male, 39, San Diego); “Because the quality of life has not changed with a professional team so it’s unlikely to change without one” (female, 32, Oklahoma City); and “Because the Browns left before and I was bummed but life was just fine, I got over it” (female, 54, Cleveland).

Entertainment was the second most frequently cited theme by those who said that teams leaving would not change the quality of life in their metro area. For these participants, comments suggested that if a team left, enough entertainment options would remain to the make a team’s absence moot. “There is a lot of activities in Atlanta to make up for losing sports teams” (female, 50, Atlanta); “There are many cultural outlets to enjoy within KC aside from sporting teams. Besides, sports are ‘just a game’” (male, 27, Kansas City); “The Chicago area has so much to do. We like our sports but we also do a lot of other stuff” (male, 52, Chicago); and “Life would still go on! DFW still has a ton of stuff to offer, Six Flags, Hurricane Harbor, museums, the stockyards etc.” (female, 54, Dallas).[88]

[88] There were a number of comments that suggested that if a team left, there would be less to do for a time, but inevitably, a new team would move into the metro area: “Other teams might replace them. People could find other ways to be entertained, including watching other teams on tv” (female, 67, Houston); “It would only change briefly until a new team was created and took over” (female, 26, Denver).

Figure 14. For those indicating quality of life would remain unchanged, the percent of comments mentioning one of the six themes



For those who said that the quality of life would remain unchanged, *identity* comments suggested that the team was not a metro area's defining feature. "I think the quality of life in Denver is based on other factors. We are known for the beautiful weather and mountains, our recreational marijuana, and breweries. None of those factors would change" (female, 26, Denver); "Because San Diego isn't a sport town at all. We have beaches and great weather instead" (male, 33, San Diego); and

> The sports teams in SLC provide entertainment and a common bonding ground for people but they are not the thing that makes the city what it is. You would have to get rid of the mountains for that to happen. (male, 32, Salt Lake City).

The final two themes for which results will be reported are *not a fan* and *money*. *Not a fan* comments refer to participants who said they were not a sports fan and, hence, a team's departure would not affect their quality of life. Typical comments include: "I don't really follow sports so it would not bother me at all" (female, 66, Philadelphia); and "I'm not into sports at all. It would have no impact on my life. And as far as I care very little impact elsewhere" (male, 31, Washington, DC). Comments related to *money* generally suggested that a team's departure would have a negligible economic impact on the area. "I don't think professional sports bring big money in San Jose, so losing it would not affect the city and its quality" (female, 35, San Jose); and

> From my perspective, it wouldn't make a difference, because I don't care about sports teams. There might be some economic effects, but I don't think it would make a huge difference. I suppose quality of life would go down for local sports fans, though. (male, 48, Portland)

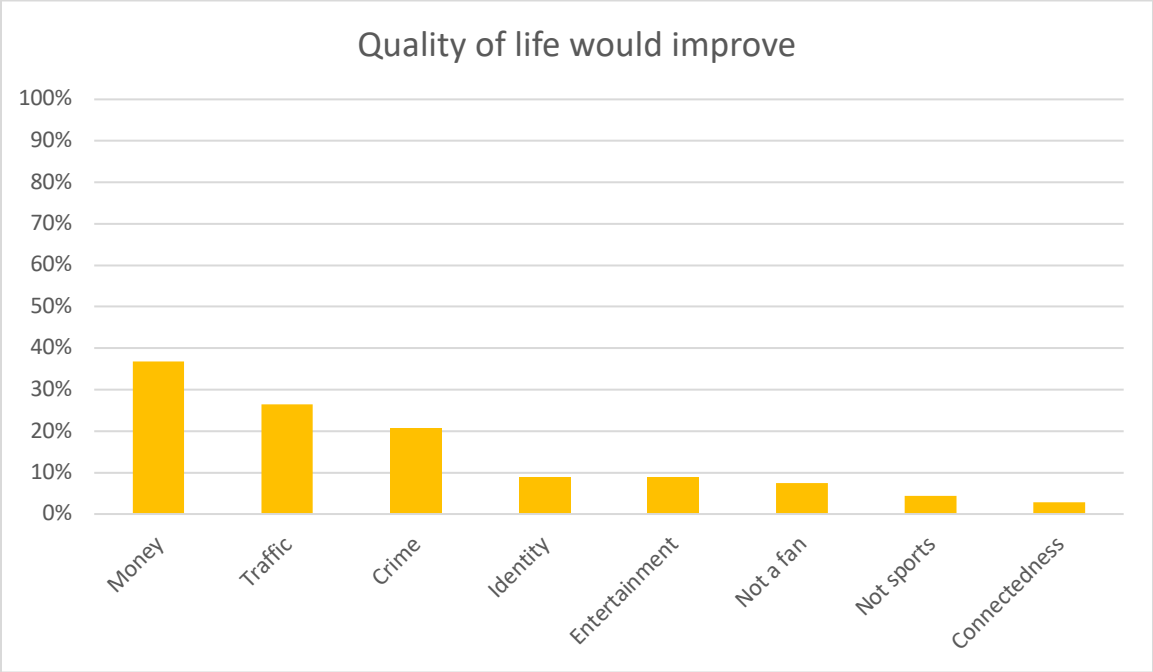
Quality of life will improve

Of the relatively few participants (n = 68) who said that quality of life would improve if teams left, three main themes emerged: *money* (36.8%), *traffic* (26.5%), and *crime* (20.6%; see Figure 15). The other five themes were addressed less frequently: *identity* (8.8%), *entertainment* (8.8%), *not a fan* (7.4%), *not sports* (4.4%), and *connectedness* (2.9%).

Money comments suggested that a team leaving would free up public monies for non-sports uses. Typical responses include: "The City would have more money to use

towards fixing the city problems instead of subsidizing professional sports teams" (male, 41, St. Louis); and "Taxes would be lower because we wouldn't have to pay for all of the stadiums" (female, 25, Minneapolis).

Figure 15. For those indicating quality of life would improve, this is the percent of comments mentioning one of the eight themes



The two themes of *traffic* and *crime* were frequently mentioned together by commenters who thought the quality of life would improve if teams left. "Professional sports draw revenue to the area which is good, but the crowds that come for sports events also cause traffic problems and contribute to an upswing in crime" (female, 30, Indianapolis); "They take in too much traffic, everyone gets drunk and becomes destructive, too much extra policing is added due to the events" (male, 45, Boston); and

> Too much traffic, drinking, and sometimes violence. Plus the new "sports arena" recently built has gentrified the area (bus fares up, no longer allowing homeless people to ride when they are going to cash in recyclables). Rent is also going up (it's unaffordable as it is!). (female, 62, Sacramento)

In summary, aside from *money*-related considerations, there are differences in how people viewed a quality of life change if the major league sports teams left their cities. For the relatively few who felt that quality of life would increase, their comments rested on concrete concerns like traffic and safety. For those who felt that quality of life would not change, sports teams did not picture into how they defined quality of life or the identity of their city, and were mainly seen as outlets for entertainment. Finally, for the participants who felt that the quality of life would fall, teams were a critical part of their and their city's identity, as well as a key element in connecting residents to one another.

Conclusion

The purpose in analyzing participants' comments – more than 3,600 of them in total – was to hear what people had to say about sports and whether or not their local professional teams made a difference to them and to their city. The themes that emerged were varied and showed that, yes, sports teams are about money and entertainment and distraction. But teams are also the source and subject of conversations, memories, identity, and gathering. True for fans and, as comments showed, even for some non-fans, teams enable the creation and preservation of stories

that connect individuals to others and to place. These findings, and those presented in the previous chapter, will be explored in greater detail in the next and final chapter.

Table 16. Summary of Themes for RQ2b and RQ2c

	RQ2b: If your metro area **gained** a major league team, the quality of life would…		
	Improve	Not change	Fall
Themes			
Connectedness	36.1%	1.1%	5.7%
Crime	0.4	5.3	18.9
Money	68.2	28.7	37.7
Not a fan	1.7	14.9	5.7
Not my city	0.0	30.9	15.1
Traffic	1.3	7.4	34.0

	RQ2c: If your metro area **lost** all of its major league teams, the quality of life would…		
	Improve	Not change	Fall
Themes			
Connectedness	2.9%	3.7%	25.7%
Crime	20.6	1.6	0.9
Entertainment	8.8	21.1	15.4
Identity	8.8	17.6	50.4
Money	36.8	12.7	34.5
Not a fan	7.4	14.7	3.9
Not sports	4.4	42.7	2.2
Traffic	26.5	2.0	0.1

Note: Columns do not sum to 100% because multiple responses were coded.

Chapter 6: Sports Teams as Storytellers

"This is what Pittsburgh is all about. We hold 6 Super Bowl rings, 5 Stanley Cups, and 4 World Series. We all bleed black and gold. We know nothing else." – Survey respondent, female, 40, Pittsburgh, PA

"Kansas City is not a world class city. I grew up here, and have come back to live twice, due to family issues. If my partner and my aging parents weren't here, I wouldn't stay. Really all we have here are the sports teams, and BBQ, and I'm a vegetarian." Survey respondent, female, 56, Kansas City, MO

It is not true, of course, that sports teams are the only things that bring identity and connectedness to Pittsburgh or Kansas City or other major league cities, but for some residents of these places, it feels that way. As source and subject of shared stories, teams connect people to each other and to the places they call home. This was evident in the open-ended responses outlined in the previous chapter. Yes, major league teams are about money and entertainment, but they are also about family, conversations, and belonging. They help people see their fellow residents not as strangers who happen to share the same zip code, but as comrades, brought together by a mutual hope for their team's success. United in this way, some view their city through team-colored glasses, with the city's symbolic identity intimately tied to its sports franchise.

Although the majority of the open-ended data demonstrated a positive take on the presence of sports teams, the closed-ended survey data analysis did not reveal

community benefits based on the mere presence of a major league sports team. Results for H1, which compared cities with and without teams, showed that whether a city had a team or not, residents' scores on sense of belonging, collective efficacy, civic participation, and integrated connectedness to the storytelling network (ICSN)[89] were, statistically speaking, the same. Were the study to have ended with H1, the conclusion would be brief: Having a major league sports team does not matter when considering the four CIT-related outcomes. Yet the study did not end with H1. Indeed, it went on to reveal civic engagement connections to fan strength, to gender, and to team success. This concluding chapter will discuss these revelations – not all of which paint a team's connection to a city in a positive light – along with their theoretical and practical implications. To that end, I will unpack specific findings, but also speak to the broader lessons learned from this investigation of cities and teams, lessons about storytellers, about fans, and about hope.

General fan strength

Although H1 showed no differences in the four CIT-related outcomes based on the presence or absence of a major league team, the four outcomes were significantly related to a person's general fan strength: as general fan strength rose, so did sense of belonging, collective efficacy, civic participation, and ICSN. This was true if a person lived in a city with, or without, a major league team. Are these positive relationships the

[89] Hereafter, for brevity's sake, when collectively listing sense of belonging, collective efficacy, civic participation, and ICSN, I will refer to them simply as the "four CIT-related outcomes."

result of being a sports fan, or is there a more fundamental personality characteristic at play that would lead a person to be both a sports fan and civically engaged? Sports fans do tend to talk to other fans about sports, they attend to local and national media to stay up-to-date on game outcomes, and they go to stadiums, bars, and parties that put them in contact with others in their community. It is possible that in building these connections to others and to their city, sports fans find themselves at an advantage when it comes to feeling a sense of belonging. Furthermore, these general sports fans, in attending to local sports media, may not only be exposed to more instances of collective efficacy – modeled by the teams they watch – but also to community news outside the realm of sports.[90] Hence, it could be that being a sports fan in general provides social and community benefits sufficient enough to explain the positive relationships between general fan strength and the four CIT-related outcomes.

It is also possible, however, that personality traits explain the connection between general sports fandom and having positive feelings about, and taking action in, one's community. Research examining the dominant personality traits of sports fans show that fandom is positively related to three of the Big Five personality traits: extroversion, openness, and conscientiousness (Wann, Dunham, Byrd, & Kennen, 2004;

[90] In a paper that I recently reviewed for the 2019 International Communication Association conference, the author(s) found a significant and positive connection between sports media exposure and incidental exposure to political news. As of this writing, I have no author information for this paper, as it was blinded for review, but I will add the citation once the paper's authorship can be determined.

see also Donovan, Carlson, & Zimmerman, 2005).[91] According to McCrae and Costa (1999), extroversion is concerned with "a preference for companionship and social stimulation," openness is related to a "need for variety [and] novelty," and conscientiousness is tied to a "strong sense of purpose and high aspiration levels" (p. 164). Extroversion and openness (but not conscientiousness) also have strong positive relationships to civic participation (Elshaug & Metzer, 2001; Gerber, Huber, Doherty, Dowling, Raso, & Ha, 2011; Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson, & Anderson, 2010) and discussion network heterogeneity (Kim, Hsu, & Gil de Zúñiga, 2013; see also McCrae, 1996). In other words, the types of people who are sports fans also tend to be the same types of people who have a broad network of friends and who engage in civic activities in their community. The positive relationships between general fan strength and the four CIT-related outcomes, as seen in all of the H1 models, suggest that these relationships could have less to do with sports fandom in particular and more to do with the underlying personality traits of city residents. Thus, it makes sense that having high scores on the four CIT-related outcomes would not be based on a city having a team or not; what matters are the types of people who live in the city. That said, H2 results showed associations between being a fan of a *local* team and civic engagement beyond what is seen for those who are sports fans in *general*.

[91] The remaining two Big Five traits are neuroticism and agreeableness (McCrae & Costa, 1999).

Local fan strength

There is something unique about having a local team to root for and rally around. H2 analyses tested the relationships between local fan strength and the four CIT-related outcomes in cities with at least one major league team. While controlling for general fan strength, local fan strength was shown to have a positive relationship with sense of belonging, civic participation, and ICSN. Beyond the effects of sports fan personality traits already mentioned, it is also possible that these associations stem from teams providing accessible stories around which people can converse and unite as CIT proposes. Branscombe and Wann's (1991) investigation of sports fandom suggests that, more than being a sports fan in general, being a fan of a local team "provides ties with the larger social structure and a sense of belonging in a society that consists of fewer community and kin relationship ties" (p. 116). If "the most basic premise of CIT is that local communities are based on resources for storytelling about the community" (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 177), then major league sports teams are one of these resources. As has been argued throughout this dissertation, a local major league sports team is a unique city-wide organization that offers residents more opportunities to connect to their storytelling network. Up to this point, I have addressed storytelling and the four CIT-related outcomes in a collective sense, but I will now focus on each of the four individually.

Local fan strength and sense of belonging

Many responses to the open-ended survey questions support the claim that a local sports team is a unifying force, a storytelling agent that brings diverse residents together under the same banner. This was evident in the prevalence of the connectedness theme in RQ2a (what do professional sports means to you), RQ2b (quality of life if your city gained a team), and RQ2c (quality of life if your city lost its teams). This theme and its many exemplars, which centered on ideas related to conversations and togetherness, underscored residents' beliefs about the power of their local teams to create a sense of belonging and unity: "[Sports] makes people share a good time together and be entertained. It makes people start conversations.... Without sports teams here, it wouldn't be the same" (male, 31, Phoenix); "[If the teams left,] I think it would completely affect the local economy, as well as the political/socio-economic bridge between the suburbs and the main city in a negative way" (female, 34, Seattle); and "Professional sports give me a sense of belonging to and connection with the city that I live in" (female, 24, Cleveland). In the respondents' own words, teams provide fans with a way to create a sense of belonging to a place and to each other.

Past CIT work has shown that sense of belonging presages both collective efficacy and civic participation (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b, p. 189). Hence, a positive association between local fan strength and sense of belonging should herald positive associations with collective efficacy and civic participation, as well as ICSN (see Wilken et al., 2009). Indeed, this was the case for two of the three variables – civic participation

and ICSN – but not for collective efficacy. Each of these relationships will be discussed below.

Local fan strength and civic participation

The connection between local fan strength and civic participation can be explained in several ways. The easiest explanation was already considered earlier in this chapter: sports fans and the civically engaged share similar personality traits (openness and extroversion), meaning sports fans are potentially those who are also civically engaged. This explanation, however, does little to account for the fact that local fan strength had a positive association with civic participation, even when controlling for general fan strength. In other words, there is something about being a fan of a local team that is distinct from being a sports fan in general. There are several explanations, some more reasonable than others. Perhaps local stadium referenda are attracting not only the attention, but the civic action of sports fans (Brown & Paul, 2002). Maybe fans become more cognizant of community needs as they travel to local stadiums, sports bars, friends' homes, and other locales – not all of which may be in their own neighborhood. Yet this explanation only addresses awareness, and not action. Although other possible explanations certainly exist (not to mention the negative association between team success and volunteer rate that will be discussed below), I contend that the heart of the positive connection between local fandom and civic participation – or local fandom and any of the four CIT-related outcomes, for that matter – lies in a team's symbolic power. A team acts as a symbol of its city (Heere & James, 2007), and in so

doing, can influence fans to attend to their community just as fans would attend to their team.

In the RQ2c analysis, identity was the most common theme among those who said that the quality of life would fall if all of the major league teams left a city. Indeed, half of the responses (50.4%) included this notion that a team was inextricably linked to a city's identity. If people see a team as symbol of the city, then this raises a question: when fans are cheering for their local team, are they not also cheering for their city? Can a Bostonian, for example, cheer for the Red Sox without also cheering for Boston? Can a Clevelander root for the Browns without also rooting for Cleveland? In light of the many open-ended responses that comingle team with community, I contend that, for local fans, cheering for the team's success is no different than cheering for the city's success. If true, then the possibility arises that fans will feel a special bond to their city, a bond that could induce not only a sense of belonging, but also a sense of responsibility to care for the city that a team has come to symbolize.

Local fan strength and ICSN

Explaining the positive relationship between local fan strength and ICSN is a more straightforward exercise. As a reminder, ICSN is a measure used to explain residents' levels of integration into their local storytelling network, with higher ICSN scores linked to greater levels of civic engagement. The ICSN formula emphasizes the importance of the networked strength of local conversational networks, community organization involvement, and attention to local media. That fan strength and ICSN are

positively related is no surprise. First, local sports are an accessible topic for many city residents, and sports talk can be a social lubricant that can lead to other conversational topics (Walsh, 2004). Second, sports fans are attentive to local media to, at the very least, stay up to date on local sports events. Third, attention to the team is, as I have argued, an opportunity to be connected to a city-wide storytelling organization. Taken together, these three aspects associated with sports fandom paint a picture of local sports fans as having ample opportunities to form a strong ICSN.

Team success and collective efficacy

Of the four CIT-related outcomes, collective efficacy was the only one that did not have a significant association with local fan strength. Recall that collective efficacy is associated with perceptions of neighbors' willingness to join together to solve community problems (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a). It is also something that is best learned by modeled behavior: observing collective efficacy in action leads others to feel a greater sense of collective efficacy themselves (Bandura, 1982). The assumption made when hypothesizing the positive relationship between collective efficacy and local fan strength was that fans would witness elite athletes working as a team and competing at the pinnacle of athletic competition in the four leagues under investigation. Attention to these contests would, via observation of modeled behavior, increase perceptions of collective efficacy. That the hypothesized relationship was not detected for local fan strength could be because a person can be a fan of a bad team; witnessing loses game after game is likely not the best way to impart collective efficacy.

The collective efficacy findings come into clearer focus once team success is included in the analysis.[92] H3 hypothesized a positive relationship between team success and the four CIT-related outcomes, but only the association with collective efficacy was confirmed. Hence, it seems that it is not being a fan of a local team that is tied to collective efficacy, but living where the local teams are more successful. This conclusion falls in line with the importance of modeled behavior as already discussed. Interestingly, as observed in model H1c, being a sports fan in general is also tied to greater collective efficacy. General fans may live far away from their favorite team, or may follow a particular sport more than a particular team, all of which may insulate them from the negative talk and media attention that surrounds a local team's floundering season. And because every game produces a winner (except on rare occasions when NFL or NHL games end in a tie), general sports fans have more opportunities to witness collective efficacy without the onus of having a particular team's performance tied to their local predilections. This is not the case for local fans. When games and seasons do not go as planned, local fans are likely affected by the symbolic connection between team and city, the bond they feel to their team, and the local media and conversations that provide frequent reminders of poor performance.

[92] As laid out in Chapter 3, team success was investigated using three different measures: regular season record, playoff appearances, and championship victories. Only regular season record had a statistically significant relationship with the four CIT-related outcomes. Miller's (2013) investigation of team success and mayoral elections also found that only regular season records, and not playoffs or championships, were significantly related to his dependent variables.

Team success was not related to sense of belonging, civic participation, or ICSN. The most likely reason for this finding is that bad teams still have fans. Devoted fans seem to stick with their teams regardless of the team record or length of the playoff or championship drought (see Uszynski, 2013). Like fans of good teams, fans of bad teams follow team news (perhaps in the hope of seeing that the team is trading for a better player or looking for a new coach), they commiserate with others about bad plays and bad seasons, and they feel that the team connects them to the city and to each other in spite of the bad record. A 26-year-old female, responding to my survey question about quality of life and team departure, expressed this notion without mincing words: "We would lose the bonding aspect of it. Even though the Mariners suck, we all bond over how much they suck."

The importance of team success and collective efficacy will be revisited in another section below. Before then, however, it is important to turn the discussion to several findings that highlight differences among city residents, differences based on gender and on fan strength.

Gender differences

A key finding yet to be discussed is related to the RQ1 results, namely that significant gender differences were evident in several models. The relationship between sense of belonging and general fan strength was moderated by gender, with general fan strength having a stronger relationship for males than females. This was also the case with sense of belonging and local fan strength, where the positive association was

significant for males but not for females. Finally, gender moderated the relationship between local fan strength and ICSN, with the positive relationship being, again, stronger for males than for females.

These findings may have a simple explanation: there are more men who are sports fans than women who are sports fans (Gallup, 2015). Of course, women can be and are just as strong in their fan strength as men. This is evidenced by research by Ware and Kowalski (2012) as well as the many open-ended responses in Chapter 5 that reveal women to be as intense in their fan strength as men. In spite of this, with belonging and especially ICSN being tied to conversations, local media attention, and organizational connectedness, gender differences may emerge because sports is typically associated with a male-dominated culture.

The above explanation for these differences, however, could be overly simplistic. When contemplating the root causes of these differences, it is possible that pervasive gender stereotypes about sports involvement preclude women more than men from having the opportunity to be socialized into the world of sports (Wiley, Shaw, & Havitz, 2000). Bereft of the more frequent sports-related opportunities often afforded males in their youth, along with the cultural promotion of men's sports over women's sports, women may not only have fewer sports-related experiences, but also feel that sports is not a place that welcomes women in the same way it welcomes men. This latter point is evidenced by the preponderance of mediated sporting events that showcase men and not women, along with mainstream sports media's poor job in covering females (Bishop,

2003; Cooky, Messner, & Musto, 2015; Kane 1988). An additional factor that may help explain the gender differences is that, apart from having fewer opportunities to participate in sports, women in general may be less interested in sports than men (a conclusion linked to divergent sports motivations for females and males; see Deaner, Balish, & Lombardo, 2016). Whatever the underlying reason for the differences, it is clear that some caution is warranted when extrapolating my findings: sense of belonging and ICSN are not universal for female and male fans. Future research would do well to explore more directly how men and women perceive the importance of teams in their cities and how these teams impact men and women in both similar and unique ways.

Non-sports-fans

Thus far, I have discussed the connections between the four CIT-related outcomes and sports fans, but now turn my attention to those whose sports fandom is low to non-existent. In chapter 2, I made the case that non-fans could still be influenced by a team through avenues related to social contagion or incidental exposure. Findings for H2, however, make it clear that sense of belonging, civic participation, and ICSN are significantly lower for non-fans than fans. Does this mean that a team's presence has no effect on local non-fans? The statistical analyses would indicate such, but the open-ended responses suggest that a team could have an influence on how people view their fellow residents and their city.

In a negative way, some non-fans were clear in their disdain for sports, with comments linking local sports teams to crime, traffic congestion, and wasted money. Still others felt that sports, while not an overt negative, had little to do with building cohesiveness within their community. In contrast to a quote shared in the Chapter 5 introduction, which highlighted a New Orleans Saints fan and her feelings about a team's power to connect people and unify a city,[93] some participants clearly felt the opposite: "I don't see where the Saints hold this city together. They are a small part of what the city is about in my eyes" (male, 44, New Orleans). Clearly, some people are fans and feel that a team has a lot, if not everything to do with creating unity and identity within a city, whereas others are not fans, and find the teams to be a distraction at best and a wasteful nuisance at worst. Yet, results for RQ2a, RQ2b, and RQ2c showed that this latter, non-fan, group was in the minority. The majority of participants were positive about a team's presence, even if they themselves were not sports fans. Frequent were the non-fan references to a loss that would be felt were the major league teams to leave the city. For example, a 23-year-old male from Cincinnati, indicating that the quality of life would fall greatly if the city's teams left, said that his personal quality of life would not change, "but many would certainly be very disappointed. Sports are integral to the community." Likewise, a 38-year-old female from Indianapolis, also reporting that quality of life would fall greatly with the departure

[93] The quote is: "no matter race/creed/background, you can always find common ground talkin' bout dem Saints" (female, 42, New Orleans).

of teams, stated, “Although I’m not a fanatic, our city is.” Examples of these types of statements are peppered throughout the open-ended results, suggesting that even though non-fans may not express a personal connection to the team, they feel that the team brings a benefit, even an ethereal one, to their community and fellow residents.

Before leaving this section, it is also worth addressing those participants who had mixed feelings about teams. As noted in Chapter 5, these were many people who felt that a team’s departure or arrival would leave the quality of life unchanged, because the good and bad would cancel each other out. Still others expressed what can best be described as a true sense of conflict over the role of sports in their communities and lives. The best example of this came from a 23-year-old female from Boston, who said that professional sports are a:

> Guilty pleasure – they really aren't that great in general for the betterment of society. They cause many problems, obfuscate and contribute to many problems, and really are a bit silly. A lot of my issues relate to how it contributes to toxic masculinity (and related issues), the sort of belligerent regionalistic fervor that reminds me of the more terrifying aspects of nationalism (and related issues), and the tricky relationship between professional sports and taxpayer money. That said, I truly do enjoy a good game at Fenway, so I guess I'm not that great of a person.

This quote, along with others like it, underscores an important point: local sports fandom is not a one-size-fits-all characteristic of residents. Some fans are more than

passionate about their teams, describing them almost as if the teams were beloved family members, invited into a place of honor in their home every game day. Some are openly disdainful of the local teams, while others have mixed feelings or simply do not care. Yes, the majority of those in my survey indicated that they were fans on some level, but it should be remembered that sense of belonging, civic participation, and ICSN are contingent on fandom and are not evident simply because a city has a team. This was not the case, however, for collective efficacy.

Hints at causality

From a statistical standpoint, I cannot prove causal linkages between my sports variables and the four CIT-related outcomes, yet there is some evidence that sports teams have an effect on fans and cities. First, the open-ended responses are rife with stories about how people feel affected by a team's presence, how a team's departure would change the city, and how a team brings people together. Listening to the voices of fans, and even some non-fans, the language they use is unequivocal in its pronouncement that teams are a cause – not an effect – of a unique sense of city-wide connectedness.

Second, although it is possible that fan strength is a two-way street when it comes to sense of belonging, civic participation, and ICSN, it feels less likely that the significant relationship between team success and collective efficacy is bi-directional. That team success would induce an increase in collective efficacy among city residents is

a more reasonable conclusion than residents' collective efficacy leading to team success.[94]

Third, a hint at a causal link from team success to collective efficacy was observed in the replication of the H1 analyses that tested a smaller sample of comparably-sized sports and non-sports cities. All findings were identical for H1, whether with the smaller replication sample or full sample of cities, with one exception: the dichotomous question order control variable had a significant negative relationship to collective efficacy in the smaller, replication sample.[95] Replication results showed that those who saw sports-related questions first had significantly *lower* collective efficacy scores than those who saw CIT-related questions first, suggesting that when primed to think about sports teams, respondents gave lower collective efficacy scores. This would intimate a causal link from team sports to collective efficacy, a link made even stronger when considering that the relationship is negative. The negative relationship stems from the post-hoc finding that the sports cities chosen for inclusion in the H1 replication actually had significantly poorer performing teams than the sports cities not included in the replication.[96] In other words, participants in the replication

[94] Home field advantage is an empirically-supported phenomenon (Courneya & Carron, 1992), but the benefits a team gains from playing at home are likely due to factors beyond the presence of supportive and optimistic fans, including playing in a stadium to which they are accustomed and being able to sleep/eat/recuperate in their own homes instead of hotels.

[95] This was the only instance in all of the analyses that the question order control variable was significant.

[96] An independent samples t-test was performed comparing *sports record* for sports cities selected for the replication analysis and sports cities not selected for the replication analysis. Results showed significantly lower *sports records* for selected cities (M = 48.19, *S.D.* = 11.23) versus non-selected cities (M = 50.14, *S.D.* = 13.19); $t(1729) = -2.77$, $p = .006$.

study all came from cities with generally bad teams, and so their responses to the collective efficacy measures were relatively low. This finding offers support for a causal linkage and for the positive team success/collective efficacy relationship uncovered in H3.

In sum, these three points suggest that, more than a correlational relationship, local major league teams have an effect on residents' beliefs and behaviors within their city. A fourth hint at causality remains – the relationship between team success and volunteer rate – and it warrants a more in-depth examination.

Team success and volunteer rate

Results from H4 suggest the potential for causality in the direction of sports influencing residents. As a reminder, H4 was an additional test of team success which suggested that team success would be positively related to United Way donations as well as volunteerism as calculated using U.S. Census Bureau data. After analyzing twelve years of data, team success was shown to have a significant – and negative – relationship with volunteer rate, and no significant relationship to donations was detected, refuting both H4 hypotheses. From a causality standpoint, a reasonable interpretation of the findings is that a city's volunteerism likely could not affect a major league team's on-field fortunes, but those on-field fortunes could influence how residents feel about, and subsequently act in, the city in which they live.

Up to this point, the discussion has painted a relatively positive picture of a team's relationship with a city and its residents. This H4 finding, however, highlights a

negative aspect of this relationship, and it requires further consideration. Why would more team success lead to less volunteerism? I offer several suggestions. The first is related to the correlation between team record and attention to sports: major league teams with good records attract more casual fans (see Langhorst, 2014). Considering that both time and the number of residents are limited resources, when more residents spend more time on sports, it leaves fewer people and fewer hours to devote to volunteering in the community. This notion of one activity replacing another is referred to as "time displacement" and, although it sounds intuitive, empirical tests have shown mixed results for this phenomenon (Moy, Scheufele, & Holbert, 1999; Vilhelmson, Thulin, & Elldér, 2017).

Second, it could be that franchise success leads to complacency, and thoughts that "all is well" in the city. This conclusion was also postulated by Miller (2013) in noting why successful sports cities tended to re-elect incumbent mayors; people turned a less critical eye on the city when the team was doing well. Indeed, psychology research suggests that a positive city atmosphere among residents could induce less-effortful appraisals of political and societal needs (see Marcus, Neuman, & MacKuen, 2000). Relatedly, if residents do indeed feel that cheering for their team is akin to cheering for their city, then for some, fandom could potentially induce a façade of participation, satiating individual appetites for greater civic involvement.

Although the research presented in this dissertation to this point supports the idea that attention to local teams can lead to civic benefits – and indeed the relationship

between local fan strength and civic participation is positive – caution is warranted if it turns out that action on important civic needs is being usurped by either attention to sports or civic contentment. At their best, teams should be storytellers that help fans reach out to their fellow residents; teams should increase opportunities to unite and serve one another, not decrease such opportunities.

Theoretical implications

To CIT, this dissertation makes a number of contributions. First, using a variety of measures, it demonstrates that a macro-level storytelling organization can have an impact on the storytelling network. To be certain, CIT has always made room for macro-level agents in its considerations of the storytelling system (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001) and the communication action context (Matei et al., 2001). Yet, with its focus on micro-level and meso-level storytellers (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b), storytelling network research could be bolstered by turning additional attention to the influence of macro-level agents on communities within a city. Indeed, this dissertation has shown that a macro-level organization has the potential to reach deep into a city, influencing in a significant way how people interact with neighbors and their neighborhood.

Second, this dissertation contends that city residents have deep connections to organizations that offer no *formal* membership or belonging, but which connect people to each other and to their communities. This was particularly evident in the open-ended responses, which were replete with statements about a team's ability to not only gather people, but to unite them as well. As most CIT research currently stands, the questions

asked about organizational connectedness are generally limited to formal memberships in local organizations (e.g., Kim & Kang, 2010; Kim et al., 2015). Understanding such connections remains a vital part of CIT research. Asking questions that expand the scope and geographic boundary of organizational connectedness could offer greater insight into the agents – meso and macro – that influence a person's storytelling network.

Related to the notion of organizational connectedness, it is worth noting that through the communication action context (CAC) in particular, CIT does take into account "comfort zones" and "hot spots" (Wilkin et al., 2011), as discussed in Chapter 2. As part of the CAC, these consist, respectively, of places where residents feel like they belong and where they engage with one another. Certainly, a sports stadium could be considered a comfort zone and hot spot. However, a team is more than its stadium. Stories generated about and by a team continue after the final buzzer has sounded and after the last car has left the parking lot. More than just connecting people to games, team stories connect people to each other and to their city (Uszynski, 2013), and these stories will remain long after stadiums are gone (Trujillo & Krizek, 1994). Hence, a team is not a place, nor is it simply a collection of players or team colors. For fans, a team is a collection of stories that can be shared across the street or across generations. In this regard, as CIT researchers investigate the impact of other potential city-wide storytellers, they would do well to consider the possibility that the results reported in this dissertation are unique; it may be that sports teams are a macro-level storyteller distinctive from all of a city's other macro-level storytellers.

Third, this dissertation lends further support to a central premise of CIT, namely that community organizations are critical to strengthening and paving access to the storytelling network (Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b). Such organizations provide not only places to gather, but they are also source and subject of stories. The research reported here confirms the essential storytelling role of organizational connectedness, as well as the importance of storytellers in helping people feel a part of, and act in, their community. Through quantitative analyses and through hearing the words of those who live in cities across the United States, it is evident that major league sports teams – macro-level agents – act in this organizational storytelling role.

Practical implications

That teams have this storytelling potential carries practical implications for cities, residents, and for the teams themselves. Danielson (1997) argued that it is the intangible benefits of sports teams, not monetary considerations, that are key to appreciating a team's real value to a city. As local officials and residents justifiably debate the merits of spending public monies on major league sports teams, the research presented here offers a non-monetary perspective on the relationships between teams and residents. In doing so, it makes some of the intangibles more tangible. Belonging and efficacy have been measured and found to be positively related to the teams and to fandom. On the other hand, results related to civic participation were mixed, with the possibility that having a successful team may temper volunteerism. Civic leaders would do well to weigh these benefits, along with the potential drawbacks, against the great

financial burdens that some cities willingly undertake in order to attract or retain a major league sports team.

For teams, these findings suggest opportunities to encourage fans and other city residents to become more involved in serving in the greater city and in residents' own neighborhoods. Indeed, some teams already do this, such as the Oakland Athletics, who regularly promote community service opportunities via their official social media accounts. Teams will be in a better position to strengthen their cities as they appreciate that, beyond bringing people together to sell souvenirs, concessions, and a few hours of entertainment, they can also foster an imagined community – a "we" – out of a large, diverse group of strangers.

Limitations and future research

Like any research, this project is not without its limitations. Although I stand by the arguments made earlier in this chapter that support causal linkages, including team-related effects on collective efficacy and volunteerism, this dissertation's most important limitation is the lack of more substantial causal links between my sports variables and the four CIT-related outcomes. Other limitations include a relative inability to understand the effects of having multiple teams in the same league in the same city (e.g., Chicago having two MLB teams: the White Sox and the Chicago Cubs), as well as the self-reported nature of responses inherent in survey data. In both cases, I attempted to address these concerns through using appropriate measures and sampling strategies. For example, my team success measures accounted for the possibility of having multiple

teams in the same league in the same city, yet more fine-tuned measures could be included in future studies to appreciate if such circumstances, unique as they are, could fracture rather than unite residents. Furthermore, my attempt to augment self-reports by providing donation data was successful in its execution, but not in supporting my hypothesized relationship.

Another limitation of note is that teams and cities are not created equally. Data analyses in Chapter 4 used modeling techniques that accounted for the differences across cities, which helped alleviate some of the statistical concerns related to each city's uniqueness. In spite of these statistical precautions, the models do not give us more depth about the individuality of each locale. For example, some teams have longer histories than others, and some cities have brighter outlooks than others. Some teams, like was just mentioned with the Oakland A's, take an active role in promoting community involvement amongst their fans, while for other teams, such concerns may lie at the periphery. All of these differences may affect fans and cities in dissimilar ways.

Indeed, differences among teams and cities are worthy of future investigation, and there is potential for theoretical and practical advancements by analyzing cities and teams individually. In so doing, the findings will not be broad brushstrokes painted across the landscape of sports cities, but detailed and individualized to each unique community investigated. Could it be that teams in America's rust belt – the Steelers, the Browns, the Red Wings, and more – connect people not only to each other and to their city, but to a city's glorious past? Open-ended responses from rust belt residents convey

a sense that some in these cities live under a steel-grey cloud of resignation, tinged with a lining of hope; a resignation that the city's best days are in its past, yet a hope that a team could restore luster to the city's faded glory.

Alternatively, could it be that newer teams with relatively little history – the Tampa Bay Rays, the Las Vegas Golden Knights, and others – actually have much less of an impact on people than would be expected? Furthermore, future research would do well to look beyond major league teams and investigate how minor league teams, college teams, and even high school teams play roles as storytelling organizations in smaller communities.

Another area of future research should involve the intersection of sports teams and ethnic communities within cities. As reviewed in Chapter 2, CIT studies have frequently centered on the storytelling networks of ethnic communities. This dissertation, however, focused broadly on cities, and the majority of my survey respondents were white. Hence, it would be illuminating to examine what, if any, role sports teams have on the storytelling network and feelings of connectedness among those who are recent immigrants. Can sports help bridge ethnic divides by providing accessible stories to those for whom an American city is a new place, who find themselves far from the land and language that they called home? It could be that attention to a game that transcends language and culture may help immigrants feel that they have found something that tells stories they understand, stories that they can tell and share and be a part of with others in their new city.

Conclusion

Several survey participants made the point that without sports, there would be nothing good to talk about in their cities. As one 30-year-old male from St. Louis said about the local teams, “we depend on them to get away from the bad stuff.” Too often, the stories that are told in and about cities are negative. A city’s timeline and identity are defined by disaster and tragedy: an earthquake, a hurricane, a mass shooting. Add to that the local news, filled with crime, divisive elections, and tales of fraud and grief, punctuated only occasionally by a story of a Good Samaritan. When does a city have something good to talk about? Something that unites friends and strangers alike not in heartache or anger, but in optimism and maybe even joy? The answer is sports. Simple as that may seem, the local team is a city-wide storytelling organization that can provide a steady stream of positive experience, unity, and memory.

These positive touchstones, these stories about not only championship parades, but also tailgating parties, family outings to a ballpark, friends gathered around a television cheering together, and neighbors talking over the fence. These stories tie people to their city and its history and to each other in a positive way that is rare, if not unmistakably unique. Of course, teams can also perform poorly, and stories can lean negative. After all, only one team can bring home the trophy each season. For this reason, sports are often equated with loss and about learning how to lose. Yet, inherent in the stories that people tell about their teams, even when the teams are bad, is hope; the perennial hope that the next play, the next game, the next season could be

different, and that the team – and, by proxy, the city – could return to, or retain, its glory.

Certainly, not everyone is a fan, and local teams do not lend hope to every city resident or every situation. A major league team is not a miracle cure for a city's ails, and as the volunteerism results showed, the team could even be a detriment at times. Yet, in our age of heightened divisiveness and skepticism, when the news is bad and with the doomsayers raising their voices, there is something hopeful in having a city-wide organization that prompts strangers to high-five one another, or to exclaim, "when rooting for the home team, everyone is the same" (female, 51, Indianapolis). As trivial as team bumper stickers might be, or hats and scarves emblazoned with team logos, they signal a togetherness that has become rare. For many, teams are a city's repository of hope, a positive symbol, and source and subject of stories that turn strangers into a community.

Appendix A: Original Survey Questionnaire

Q1.1 **Consent Form**

Consent to Participate in Internet Research

You are invited to participate in a research study, entitled "Your Community." The study is being conducted by Alexander Curry, Department of Communication Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 2504 Whitis Ave. A1105, Austin, TX 78712-1075, email: alexcurry@utexas.edu. You may contact Mr. Curry with any questions about the study.

The purpose of this research study is to get your thoughts about your community. Your participation in the study will contribute to a better understanding of community life. Up to 2,600 participants will be included in this study. To participate, you must be at least 18 years old and a resident of one of the metropolitan statistical areas listed in the HIT instructions.

If you agree to participate: You will answer questions regarding your thoughts about your community. The study will take approximately 10-15 minutes. You will be compensated $0.50 through MTurk for your participation in this study.

Risks/Benefits/Confidentiality of Data

The risks created by this study are minimal and pose no greater risk than everyday interaction. The items ask participants to think about their community. The greatest risk is that the items may elicit emotional thoughts or feelings regarding their community. Although minimal psychological distress may occur, such effects are not expected.

There will be no costs for participating. Further, there will be no direct benefits to the participants. On a societal level, the proposed study would help researchers gain insights into what affects community and civic life.

No personally identifying information will be collected. A limited number of research team members will have access to the data during data collection. All information will be kept on a password protected computer accessible only by researchers associated with the study.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to you will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any study.

Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas in any way. If you do not want to participate either simply stop participating or close the browser window.

Questions about your rights as a research participant

This study has been reviewed by the Office of Research Support and the study number is **2017-08-0025.** If you have questions about your rights or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Office of Research Support by

phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu. Thank you. ***You are welcome to print a copy of this information to keep for your records.***

By clicking the “>>” below, you give your consent to participate in this study. If you have read this information and have decided to agree to be an eligible participant, please press the ">>" button at the bottom of the screen, otherwise use the X at the upper right corner to close this window and disconnect.

--PAGE BREAK--

Q1.3 Only those age 18 or older are eligible to participate in this study.
Are you 18 years of age or older?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If Only those age 18 or older are eligible to participate in this study. Are you 18 years of age or... = No

--PAGE BREAK--

Q1.4 This survey is designed for those who currently reside in the [name] metropolitan area, a location that includes [name] and other surrounding communities and suburbs.

If you do not live in the [name] metro area, you are not eligible to take this survey. If you do not live in the [name] metro area, you will not be paid for completing this survey.

In what area do you currently reside?

- [metro area name] (1)
- Outside the [name] metropolitan area (2)

Skip To: End of Survey If This survey is designed for those who currently reside in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, a loc... = Outside the Pittsburgh metropolitan area

--PAGE BREAK--

Q1.5 What is the 5-digit zip code of your residence in the
${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} metropolitan area?

_____

--PAGE BREAK--

Q1.7 Instructions:

On the next screens you will be asked questions about you and your community. Please answer

the questions truthfully and to your best ability. All responses will remain anonymous.

The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Once you start you will be unable to resume it at a later time.

To begin the survey, click on the ">>" button below. Please do not use your browser's own forward and back buttons.

End of Block: Consent, screening, and instructions
Start of Block: Sports questions

Display This Question:
If How many of your neighbors do you know well enough to... , Talk with them about a personal problem? [0] Is Displayed

Q2.1 Next, we have a few questions about professional sports in your metropolitan area.

--PAGE BREAK--

Q2.2 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement:

I consider myself to be a sports fan.

- Strongly agree (1)
- Agree (2)
- Somewhat agree (3)
- Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- Somewhat disagree (5)
- Disagree (6)
- Strongly disagree (7)

Skip To: Q2.9 If Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement: I consider mys... = Strongly disagree

--PAGE BREAK--

Q2.3 Do you have a favorite sports team? This can be a team from any city or any sport.

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

--PAGE BREAK--

Display This Question:
If Do you have a favorite sports team? This can be a team from any city or any sport. = Yes

Q2.4 What is the name of your favorite sports team? This can be a team from any city or any sport.

_____

[NOTE: Questions Q2.5 thru Q2.10 were not shown to those who lived in metro areas with no major league team.]

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Q2.5 We have a few more sports-related questions for you. Please note that these questions are related to the ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} area.

Q2.6 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

I am a fan of the...

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
[local major league team] (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
[local major league team] (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
[Note: the number of local major league teams determined the number of response options for this question] (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q2.7 If you had to choose a favorite team from the following list, which team would you choose?

- ○ Pirates (1)
- ○ Steelers (2)
- ○ Penguins (13)
- ○ I don't like any of these teams (5)

Skip To: Q2.9 If If you had to choose a favorite team from the following list, which team would you choose? = I don't like any of these team

--PAGE BREAK--

Q2.8 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
My friends see me as a ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} fan. (Q2.8_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I believe that following the ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} is the most enjoyable form of entertainment (Q2.8_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
My life would be less enjoyable if I were not able to follow the ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}. (Q2.8_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Being a ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} fan is very important to me. (Q2.8_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like to display the ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} name or logo on my clothes, my car, in my home, or where I work. (Q2.8_5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like to keep informed about what's happening with the ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}. (Q2.8_6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

--PAGE BREAK--

Q2.9 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements. Please note that these statements refer to the following professional teams in ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1}: ${Q2.6/ChoiceGroup/AllChoices?displayLogic=0}.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
In my home, people are frequently watching or listening to ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} sports. (Q2.9_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In my home, people are frequently talking about ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} sports. (Q2.9_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In my home, I like to watch or listen to ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} sports. (Q2.9_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
In my home, I like to talk about ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} sports. (Q2.9_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I talk with my neighbors about ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} sports. (Q2.9_5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

--PAGE BREAK--

Q2.10 In the past 12 months, how many professional sporting events have you attended in ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1}?

- ○ None (1)
- ○ 1 or 2 (2)
- ○ 3 to 5 (3)
- ○ 6 to 10 (4)
- ○ More than 10 (5)

--PAGE BREAK--

Display This Question:
If If What is the name of your favorite sports team? This can be a team from any city or any sport. Text Response Is Displayed

Q2.11 What do professional sports mean to you?

_____
_____
_____

End of Block: Sports questions
Start of Block: CIT

Display This Question:
If Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement: I consider mys... , Strongly agree Is Displayed

Q3.1 Next, we have some questions about your neighborhood and your city.

--PAGE BREAK--

Q3.2 How many of your neighbors do you know well enough to...

	0 (0)	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 or more (10)
Ask them to keep watch on your house or apartment? (Q3.2_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ask for a ride? (Q3.2_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Talk with them about a personal problem? (Q3.2_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ask for their assistance in making a repair? (Q3.2_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Q3.3 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
I am interested in knowing what my neighbors are like. (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I enjoy meeting and talking with my neighbors. (2)	○	○	○	○	○
It's easy to become friends with my neighbors. (3)	○	○	○	○	○
My neighbors always borrow things from me and my family. (4)	○	○	○	○	○

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Q3.4 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Disagree (4)	Strongly disagree (5)
People in my neighborhood are willing to help each other. (Q3.4_1)	○	○	○	○	○
This is a close knit neighborhood. (Q3.4_2)	○	○	○	○	○
I generally trust people in my neighborhood. (Q3.4_3)	○	○	○	○	○
People in my neighborhood generally get along with each other. (Q3.4_4)	○	○	○	○	○
People in my neighborhood share the same values. (Q3.4_5)	○	○	○	○	○

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Q3.5 On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = no one, and 5 = everyone, how many of your neighbors do you think will participate in solving each of the problems below?

	No one will participate 1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	Everyone will participate 5 (5)
There is a safety issue walking at night in your neighborhood. (Q3.5_1)	○	○	○	○	○
Stores harmful to children are about to open in your town. (Q3.5_2)	○	○	○	○	○
Factories emanating hazardous chemicals are about to be built in your town. (Q3.5_3)	○	○	○	○	○
More traffic lights are needed to solve severe traffic issues, and your neighbors are recruiting people to prepare a petition. (Q3.5_4)	○	○	○	○	○

Volunteers are needed to participate in community revitalization projects organized by your neighbors. (Q3.5_5)	○	○	○	○	○

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Q3.6 On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 = never, and 10 = all the time, how often do you talk with your neighbors about anything related to your neighborhood?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	1 (0)	2 (1)	3 (2)	4 (3)	5 (4)	6 (5)	7 (6)	8 (7)	9 (8)		
Never (Q3.6_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	All the time

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Q3.7 We know that most people don't vote in all elections. Usually between one-quarter and one-half of those eligible actually come out to vote. Can you tell us how often you vote in...

	Always (1)	Sometimes (2)	Rarely (3)	Never (4)
Local elections (1)	○	○	○	○
National elections (2)	○	○	○	○

--PAGE BREAK--

Q3.8 Have you participated in any of the following activities in the past 12 months:

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Attended a city council meeting, public hearing, or legislative meeting? (1)	○	○
Written a letter to the editor of a news organization? (2)	○	○
Contacted an elected official about a problem? (3)	○	○
Circulated a petition? (4)	○	○
Taken part in a political demonstration or protest? (5)	○	○

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Q3.9 Have you participated in any of the following activities in the past 12 months:

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Worked together informally with someone or some group to solve a problem in your community? (Q3.9_1)	○	○
Participated in any community service or volunteer activity (not including for a political candidate or campaign) as a way to help others? (Q3.9_2)	○	○
Personally walked, ran, or bicycled for a local charitable cause? (Q3.9_3)	○	○
Raised money for a local charitable cause? (Q3.9_4)	○	○
Contributed money to a local candidate, the local political party, or any local organization that supported local candidates? (Q3.9_5)	○	○
Volunteered for a local political organization or candidate running for local office? (Q3.9_6)	○	○

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Q3.10 Do you belong to any of the following types of organizations?

	Yes (1)	No (2)
Sport or recreational (Q3.10_1)	○	○
Cultural or ethnic (Q3.10_2)	○	○
Religious (Q3.10_3)	○	○
Neighborhood or homeowner's (Q3.10_4)	○	○
Political or educational (Q3.10_5)	○	○
Other: (Q3.10_6)	○	○

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Q3.11 How often do you use the following to get **local** news and information?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Occasionally (4)	Frequently (5)	Very frequently (6)	Always (7)
Local television news (broadcast or online) (Q3.11_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local newspapers (print or online) (Q3.11_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Local news radio (broadcast or online) (Q3.11_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Neighborhood newspapers (print or online) (Q3.11_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Neighborhood television news (broadcast or online) (Q3.11_5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Community organization newsletters (Q3.11_6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Neighborhood websites (Q3.11_7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Social media among neighborhood people (Q3.11_8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Neighborhood email newsletters or listservs (Q3.11_9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q3.12 How often do you use the following to get **local** news and information?

	Never (1)	Very rarely (2)	Rarely (3)	Occasionally (4)	Frequently (5)	Very frequently (6)	Always (7)
National television news (broadcast, cable, or online) (Q3.12_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
National newspapers (print or online) (Q3.12_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
National news magazines (print or online) (Q3.12_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
National news radio (broadcast or online) (Q3.12_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

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Q3.13 Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements about your city.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
I live here because I want to. (Q3.13_1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I am proud to tell others where I live. (Q3.13_2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would not want to move away from here. (Q3.13_3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I think this city is an ideal place to live. (Q3.13_4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I feel like I belong in my community. (Q3.13_5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
I like the neighborhood in which I live. (Q3.13_6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The city's future looks bright. (Q3.13_7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: CIT
Start of Block: If team left - from Johnson et al 2001 CVM Penguins

[NOTE: Questions Q4.1a & Q4.2a were shown to those who lived in metro areas with *no* major league team; questions Q4.1b & Q4.2b were shown to those who lived in metro areas *with* at least one major league team.]

Q4.1a If a professional team from Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, or the National Hockey League moved to ${Q1.4/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}, the quality of life in the ${Q1.4/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} metro area would...

- fall a great deal (1)
- fall slightly (2)
- remain unchanged (3)
- improve slightly (4)
- improve a great deal (5)

Q4.1b If all of the professional sports teams in ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} left and moved elsewhere, the quality of life in the ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} metro area would...

- fall a great deal (1)
- fall slightly (2)
- remain unchanged (3)
- improve slightly (4)
- improve a great deal (5)

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Q4.2a In a few words, can you tell us why you think the quality of life in ${Q1.4/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} would ${Q4.1/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} if a professional sports team moved to ${Q1.4/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Q4.2b In a few words, can you tell me why you think the quality of life in ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1} would ${Q4.1/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} if all the professional sports teams left ${Q1.4/ChoiceDescription/1}?

_____
_____
_____
_____

End of Block: If team left - from Johnson et al 2001 CVM Penguins
Start of Block: Civic pride - Gladden & Funk (2002)

Display This Question:
If If you had to choose a favorite team from the following list, which team would you choose? != I don't like any of these teams
And Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statement: I consider mys... != Strongly disagree

Q5.1 Thinking again about the ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}, please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly agree (1)	Agree (2)	Somewhat agree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (5)	Disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
The ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} help citizens be proud of where they live. (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} help elevate the image of its community. (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
The ${Q2.7/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} bring prestige to the community. (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Civic pride - Gladden & Funk (2002)
Start of Block: Demographics

Q6.1 We have just a few more questions to help us understand more about the people who participated in this study.

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Q6.2 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a(n):

- ○ Democrat (1)
- ○ Republican (2)
- ○ Independent (3)
- ○ Other (Please Specify) (4) _____

--PAGE BREAK--

Display This Question:
If Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a(n): = Independent
Or Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a(n): = Other (Please Specify)

Q6.3 Do you consider yourself closer to:
- The Republican Party (1)
- The Democratic Party (2)
- Neither (3)

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Display This Question:
If Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a(n): = Democrat
Or Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a(n): = Republican

Q6.4 Do you consider yourself:
- A Strong ${Q6.2/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} (1)
- Not a Very Strong ${Q6.2/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices} (2)

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Q6.5 Generally speaking, would you describe your political views as:
- Very Conservative (1)
- Conservative (2)
- Moderate (3)
- Liberal (4)
- Very Liberal (5)

--PAGE BREAK—

Q6.6 What is your gender?
- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Other (3)

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Q6.7 What is the last grade or class you completed in school?

- Grade 8 or lower (1)
- Some high school, no diploma (2)
- High school diploma or equivalent (3)
- Technical or vocational school after high school (4)
- Some college, no degree (5)
- Associate's or two-year college degree (6)
- Four-year college degree (7)
- Graduate or professional school after college, no degree (8)
- Graduate or professional degree (9)

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Q6.8 Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

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Q6.9 What is your race?
- American Indian or Alaska Native (1)
- Asian (2)
- Black or African American (3)
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (4)
- White (5)
- Other (please specify) (6) _____

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Q6.10 Who in your family first came to the United States?
- Me (1)
- My parents (2)
- My grandparents (3)
- My great grandparents or earlier (4)

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Q6.11 How many years have you lived in your current neighborhood?

▼ 1 year or less (1) ... 25 years or more (25)

Q6.12 Are you a renter or a homeowner?

- Renter (1)
- Homeowner (home does not need to be paid off) (2)
- Neither (3)

Q6.13 Including you, how many people live in your current residence?

▼ 1 (1) ... 9 or more (9)

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Q6.14 In what year were you born?

▼ 1999 (18) ... 1918 or earlier (99)

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Q6.15 What was your household income last year?

- Less than $30,000 (1)
- $30,000 - $49,999 (2)
- $50,000 - $74,999 (3)
- $75,000 and above (4)

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Q6.16 Do you have any comments or thoughts about this study? Please let us know here.

_____

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Q6.17 Please create a random code (5 characters in length) that you will be also asked to provide when you submit your HIT. We will use this code to verify your participation in the survey before approving payment.

To maintain your anonymity, avoid using information that would identify you. Please do not use easy codes like 12345 because we may not be able to verify this number and pay you. Example codes are: e8w67 or D0899. Type in your 5-digit created code here and then MAKE SURE TO TYPE THIS SAME CODE INTO THE HIT ON MTURK SO THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR PAYMENT!

_____

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Q6.18 Thank you for your time! Please click the ">>" button below to ensure that your survey responses are counted.

End of Block: Demographics
End of Survey

Appendix B: Codebook for Content Analysis of Open-Ended Responses

General note for all coding: Code 1 if the theme is present, code 0 if the theme is not present.

QUESTION: What do what do professional sports mean to you?

1. **Entertainment**
    a. Includes things like fun, exciting, enjoy, etc.
2. **Outlet** (this is something positive)
    a. Includes hobby, pastime, relax
3. **Community**
    a. Brings community together, city roots for, city supports, loyal fans, fanbase
4. **Family**
    a. Include explicit references to family, family members, etc.
5. **Friends**
    a. Include explicit references to friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc.
6. **Socialize**
    a. Any refences to talking, engaging socially, socializing, feelings of belonging, etc.
7. **Definition**
    a. This is a literal definition of what professional sports is

QUESTION: In a few words, can you tell us why you think the quality of life in [metro area name] would [response to Q4.1_gain] if a professional sports team moved to [metro area name]?

1. **Money**
    a. Positive responses: Jobs, tourism, taxes, businesses
    b. Negative responses: City costs, money not worth it, games are too expensive, city won't get the money back that it spends
    c. Neutral responses: Too much, any financial gains would be evened out by some negative aspect of having a team here.
2. **Connectedness**
    a. Bring people together, unity the community, sense of community, things to talk about, more things to do
3. **Traffic**
    a. Any explicit reference to traffic/parking
4. **Crime**

a. Drunks, crime, unruly fans, etc.

5. **Not my city**
    a. We're too small, we have other things to keep us interested, we're a college town; we already have a team, already have our own things to do, already have our own culture
6. **Not a fan**
    a. Explicit references to "I'm not a sports fan"; don't know, don't care, doesn't affect me

QUESTION: In a few words, can you tell us why you think the quality of life in [metro area name] would [response to Q4.1_gain] if a professional sports team moved to [metro area name]?

1. **Identity**
    a. Quality will fall responses: The city is based on sports and sports fans ("people here like sports!"); The team leaving would diminish the city/life in the city in some way. (But, do not count "less to do" here, that goes in the *thing to do* category);
        i. It's all we have, we would lose our identity, decrease in civic pride, people in our town love their teams; this is a sports town; less to live for in the city
            1. Atlanta loves sports!
            2. Denver is a big sports town, fans are very devoted
            3. That's what keeps the city going
            4. The Bills mean a lot to Buffalo
            5. Jacksonville doesn't have the best beaches (i.e., we are a sports town, not a beach town).
    b. Quality will rise or remain unchanged: Our city is not a sports city, we have other identities
2. **Money**
    a. Revenue, tourism, jobs, business, taxes, "less people downtown"
3. **Connectedness**
    a. Bring people together, unite the community, sense of community, things to talk about, belonging, conversations, small talk, make memories with family and friends; I was happy "because everyone else was happy", bond between people, social
        i. Needs to be explicit references to togetherness, unity, community, talking; anything about being together or bringing people together.
4. **Entertainment**

a. If the team leaves, we won't/will have anything else to do, with references specifically about doing things, going to games, etc.; References to entertainment, night life, family outings/activities.
    i. Do not count: "Boring"

5. Not fan

a. I'm not a fan; I don't watch/participate in sports

6. Not sports

a. Don't need sports to be happy or have a good city; The team/sports are not what makes a community good; Sports don't/won't change things

7. Crime

a. Explicit references to crime, drunkenness, rowdy behavior, etc.

8. **Traffic**

a. Explicit references to traffic, parking, etc.

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